

Hafa Adai!

CNMI visitor arrivals up 147% in May. **PAGE 3**

Ogo: Repeal Rota ban on export of Bayogo seeds. **PAGE 6**

\$1

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Airfare, housing, transportation coverage continues for medical referrals

The Commonwealth Health-care Corp. continues to pay for the airfare, housing, and

transportation for participants of the Health Network Program, formerly known as the

Medical Referral program.

A CHCC statement yesterday assured that CHCC CEO

Esther Muña, Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang have been

continuously working closely together to address the shortfall of the HNP. As a result,

the CNMI government was able to transfer more funds to

See **AIRFARE** on Page 4

Ex-BMV director pleads guilty

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The former director of the Department of Public Safety's Bureau of Motor Vehicles, Juana Deleon Guerrero, has pleaded guilty to the

license fraud charge filed against her by the U.S. government.

Deleon Guerrero appeared before U.S. District Court for the NMI Magistrate Judge Heather Kennedy yesterday and pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to unlaw-

fully produce an identification document, specifically local driver's licenses.

Deleon Guerrero initially pleaded not guilty but

See **EX-BMV** on Page 4



KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

Former Bureau of Motor Vehicles director Juana Deleon Guerrero exits the U.S. District Court for the NMI courtroom with her lawyer, Robert Torres, after pleading guilty to license fraud

Seizure of IPI's vehicles OK'd

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The District Court for the NMI has authorized U.S. Marshals Service to seize Imperial Pacific International

(CNMI) LLC's vehicles pursuant to a writ of execution granted in favor of USA Fanter Corp. Ltd.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona

See **SEIZURE** on Page 4

What prompted CUC boil water notice?

» **Flores requests CUC explanation**

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Rep. Marissa Renee Flores (Ind-Saipan) sought an explanation yesterday from the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. about its public advisory notice regarding water contamination in the southern



Flores

areas of Saipan.

At the same time, CUC also issued a precautionary "boil water" notice effective

See **FLORES** on Page 4

'TOUCHBACK' COUNTDOWN
Number of days left until the "touchback" rule takes effect on Sept. 30, 2023:

99



NMC AWARDED \$10M GRANT

Northern Marianas College announced yesterday that it has been awarded a competitive grant of \$10 million by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to create and expand workforce development efforts relating to agri-tourism. NMC-Cooperative Research Extension and Education Service interim dean Patricia Coleman, left, and NMC business professor Dr. Yunzi Zang, together with NMC CREES professor and State Program and Food Science leader Dr. Zaidul Sarker, inset, led the grant writing and development efforts to secure the competitive U.S. Department of Agriculture grant.

NMC

INSIDE



BUSINESS

Thanks to HafaAdai Rent A Car, I was able to play Gulliver for a day with the 2022 Nissan Armada.

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WORLD

Rescuers rush vessels to the area where a submersible disappeared near the Titanic wreck.

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LIFE & STYLE

Geraldo Rivera has quit as a liberal voice on Fox News' political combat show "The Five."

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GOT A NEWS TIP?

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Local

Coca-Cola, Foremost to sponsor Oceania Athletics

Coca-Cola and Foremost have been named the official beverage partners of the 2023 Oceania Cup and Oceania Masters Athletics Championships following the recent sponsorship

agreement between Coca-Cola Beverage Co. (Micronesia), Inc. and Foremost Foods, Inc. and the Oceania Athletics local organizing committee.

Coca-Cola and Foremost are hydrating all 195 athletes, coaches and officials for the entirety of the five-day Oceania Athletics competition from June 22 to June 26 at the Oleai sports complex.

To complete the sponsorship package, the group of companies that comprises Coca-Cola, Foremost, and Subway Restaurants of Saipan will also serve discounted meals at Subway to 35 CNMI national athletes throughout the games and a two-day lunch of Subway Sandwich Platters for 20 Oceania Athletics officials.

"Coca-Cola, Foremost, and Subway are committed to support sporting events that grow and inspire talented athletes in our region and on the world stage. We believe that sports

are a great unifier that bring people together to aspire for and achieve the triumph of the human spirit," said Marcos W. Fong, group CEO of Coca-Cola Beverage Co. (Micronesia), Inc., Foremost Foods Saipan, and Subway Restaurants of Saipan.

Coca-Cola and Foremost

have been refreshing the Northern Marianas since 1975 and Subway continues to be the leading innovator in the quick service restaurant industry, serving delicious submarine sandwiches with garden-fresh ingredients on freshly baked breads on Saipan for well over 35 years. (PR)

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30% Discount at any food and beverage outlet except ISLA (includes 1 guest per member)
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\$5 per day tennis guest access(maximum 4 guests per member)
Towels and Lockers available (\$10 deposit required every transaction)

Conditions

Dates of the promo cannot be changed*The Summer Family Membership cannot be used in PIC Guam*Other promotions or discounts do not apply*Members should check in at Information Center every time*Hours of operations may fluctuate seasonally*Lost cards fee is \$50



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Marcos W. Fong, right, CEO of Coca-Cola Beverage Co. (Micronesia), Inc. and Foremost Foods, Inc., shakes hands with Ramon "Ray" Tebuteb, president of the Northern Marianas Athletics.

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CNMI visitor arrivals up 147% in May

Visitor arrivals to the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota grew 147% to 17,117 in May 2023, compared to 6,939 visitors received in May 2022, according to the Marianas Visitors Authority yesterday.

Year-to-date arrivals this fiscal year are already 1.5 times higher than total visitor

arrivals last fiscal year, with May 2023 marking the highest monthly arrivals since before the pandemic.

Visitor arrivals from South Korea reached 13,911 compared to 5,303 in May last year. Strong demand in Korea has generated an abundance of air service to the Marianas.

Low-cost carrier Jeju Air has announced it will increase its triple daily flights by adding one more daily flight beginning June 29, with flights from Busan launching on July 19 and continuing through August 30. T'Way also has daily flights from Seoul and is adding eight charter flights during

the summer high peak season. Full-service carrier Asiana Airlines will increase from four flights a week to daily service in July through August 2023. By the end of fiscal year 2023, available air seats from Korea are projected to be restored to 80% of the number available before the pandemic.

The Marianas received 649 visitors from Japan in May

2023 compared to 37 visitors in May 2022. May marked the second highest monthly arrivals from Japan this fiscal year, despite the cancellation of four flights by lone carrier United Airlines from Tokyo due to Typhoon Mawar. In its marketing efforts, the MVA continues to face the obstacles of a strong U.S. dollar and a Japan national travel discount program that offers up to 20% discount to encourage domestic—rather than outbound—travel. Also, many Japanese are also still hesitant to travel due to fears of COVID-19, especially as a large percentage of Japanese children are not vaccinated. Amidst a number of marketing initiatives—including several recent media familiarization tours that have generated millions of dollars in ad exposure value for the destination—the MVA has extended its

“Marianacation” promotion through August. According to the MVA, bookings for June and July are slightly higher than prior months.

Overall, visitor arrivals to the Marianas have recovered 41% visitor arrivals year-to-date compared to fiscal year 2019 before the pandemic. China, which rivalled South Korea as a top source market of the Marianas prior to the pandemic, registered 392 visitors arriving via Korea and Japan. In May the Marianas also received 1,438 visitors from USA, 515 visitors from Guam, and a combined 212 visitors from all other markets. (MVA)

Bill seeks to authorize CEDA to write off \$45.5M principal sum from CUC's loans

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Rep. Vincent Aldan (Ind-Saipan) introduced Tuesday a legislation to authorize the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority to write off \$45.5 million of the principal sum, and interest due, from loans extended to the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.

Under Aldan's House Bill 23-52, all shares and stock owned by CEDA in CUC are dissolved, ending any ownership by CEDA in CUC.

The write off authorized under the bill shall be deemed the final settlement of all debts, obligations, and claims arising from the loans extended to CUC.

Aldan stated in the bill that the CNMI has been grappling with this longstanding issue related to the outstanding debt owed by CUC. He said the legal and policy implications of this issue have been the subject of intense scrutiny in re-

cent years, resulting in several legislative proposals, court cases, and other initiatives aimed at finding a resolution.

The lawmaker said the bill will authorize CEDA to write off the principal sum and interest due to it from loans extended to CUC, as referenced in the amended Memorandum of Agreement executed by then-Common-

wealth Development Authority and CUC in 2004.

Aldan chairs the House of Representatives Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications Committee.

Aldan said the outstanding debt owed by CUC to CEDA has significant financial implications for the broader economic stability and development of the CNMI. He said

the financial condition of CUC is critical to the economic stability and development of the CNMI, and that finding a resolution to the outstanding debt issue is therefore important. He said authorizing the write off is a reasonable and appropriate solution to the loan repayment issue.

He said this proposed solution is a fair and equitable resolution that benefits both parties.

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Website: www.cnmiports.com

AMENDED NOTICE TO BIDDERS

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY (CPA) is inviting qualified contractors to submit their qualifications and bid proposals and their qualifications for the **FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT PASSENGER LOADING BRIDGES 1, 4 AND 5 REPLACEMENT, AIP NO. 3-69-0002-100, SAIPAN, COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS.**

Bidders are to submit one original and two copies of their bid which shall be sealed in an envelope and marked on the cover package outside as follows: "Passenger Loading Bridges 1, 4 and 5 Replacement for the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Saipan, CNMI, AIP No. 3-69-0002-100" and submitted no later than **2:00 p.m., FRIDAY, JULY 14, 2023**, to the Office of the Executive Director, 2nd floor of the Arrival Terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, at which time and place the sealed proposals will be publicly opened and read.

The Project, in general, consists of, but is not limited to replacement of three existing passenger boarding bridges at Gates 1, 4, and 5 with new apron-drive bridges at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, including all associated work in accordance with the Project Drawings and Specifications.

The Project is being financed by funds from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA). The Contract provides that the Contractor shall invoice for labor and materials for passenger boarding bridge replacement at Gate 1 separately from the invoice for passenger boarding bridges replacement at Gates 4 and 5 (which may be invoiced together).

The contract award, if it is to be made, will be made within one hundred twenty (120) calendar days from the receipt of bids. CPA reserves the right to hold such bids in effect for one hundred eighty (180) calendar days from the date of bid opening.

A DVD containing the Contract Documents including plans, specifications and the bid schedule, may be obtained at the CPA Accounting Office, 2nd floor of the Departure Terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, upon the payment of **TWO HUNDRED FIFTY U.S. DOLLARS (\$250.00)** for each set of bid documents in electronic format (DVD). The payment is nonrefundable unless bids are cancelled. Payment shall be made in cash, credit card, cashier's check or U.S. postal money order payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority. Bidders should notify Ms. Wendi L. Prater, Executive Assistant/Project Manager at wprater@cnmiports.com immediately if there are issues retrieving the files on the DVD. Bidders should also verify all information using the specification table of contents and the index of drawings.

A pre-bid conference will be held at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, at **10:00 a.m., FRIDAY, JUNE 9, 2023**, at the Saipan Airport Conference Room, 2nd floor of the Departure Terminal, to explain and clarify any questions regarding this project. Attendance is not mandatory. A site visit will follow the pre-bid conference. For site visits after the pre-bid conference, bidders are to coordinate with Ms. Wendi Prater, CPA's Executive Assistant/Project Manager at email address wprater@cnmiports.com or telephone number (670) 237-6500.

Questions should be submitted in writing to the CPA Executive Director's Office, 2nd floor of the Arrival Terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or emailed to Ms. Wendi L. Prater, Executive Assistant/Project Manager at wprater@cnmiports.com, at least ten (10) days prior to the bid opening date; with the exception of bid submission extension requests which have no deadline. Responses to all questions and requests for information will be provided to all bidders who purchased the bid documents and attended the pre-bid conference.

Bidders shall use the bid schedule form furnished on the DVD. Each bidder should also supply all supplemental information required in the specifications.

The contract period for construction of the project in its entirety shall be **FIVE HUNDRED TWENTY-SIX (526)** calendar days for all three bridges. Liquidated damages in the amount of **ONE THOUSAND (\$1,000.00) U.S. Dollars** shall be assessed the Contractor for each calendar day that the completion of the Project is delayed beyond the contract completion date without approved excuse.

The apparent low bidder will be subject to a thorough and comprehensive review of its qualifications and Bid Documents to ensure that they are "responsive and responsible." This review will include, but is not necessarily limited to previous project experience, financial capabilities, quality of equipment and personnel, and bonding and insurance. If the apparent low bidder is found not to be "responsive or responsible", their bid will be rejected and the next lowest bidder will be evaluated for qualifications.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals submitted for: (a) any of the reasons set forth in this Notice to Bidders; or (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding bid rejection or cancellation; (c) any calculation error made in the bid schedule or mis-enter of the quantity of line item; or (d) sufficient justification exists that awarding the project contract would not be in the best interest of CPA. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said bids if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest.

Each bid shall be accompanied by either a bid bond by a U.S. Treasury listed or CPA approved surety company, a certified check, or a cashier's check in the amount not less than ten percent (10%) of the bid price. Checks shall be made payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

All mechanics and laborers for this procurement project shall be paid no less than the minimum wage rate established by the CNMI or the U.S. Secretary of Labor, whichever is higher. A copy of the Department of the Federal Labor Wage Rate Determination is included in Section GP 70-28 of the specifications. The bidder shall take into account minimum wage increases that may be imposed in the CNMI over the life of the Contract and include associated costs in the bid proposal. The EEO requirements, labor provisions, and wage rates are included in the specifications.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority, in accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252, 42 USC §§ 2000d to 2000d-4) and the Regulations, hereby notifies all bidders or offerors that it will affirmatively ensure that any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprises will be afforded full and fair opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award.

The United States Secretary of Transportation has granted the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands an exemption from the requirements of the Department of Transportation's Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) regulation, which later became the Department of Transportation's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program, as it relates to FAA grant programs. The Secretary of Transportation has not determined that a portion of those requirements should be reinstated.

By submitting a bid/proposal under this solicitation, the bidder or offeror certifies that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred or suspended by any Federal department or agency from participation in this transaction.

In addition to the above, all bidders shall comply with all other Federal requirements under this procurement, including but not limited to Buy American Preference, Foreign Trade Restriction, Davis Bacon, Veteran's Preference, Affirmative Action and Government wide Debarment and Suspension and Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-free Workplace. Further details on all Federal requirements are provided in the specifications.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY:

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date: June 16, 2023

Enriquez will be 12th UOG president

The University of Guam Board of Regents has selected Dr. Anita Borja Enriquez as the next president of the University of Guam, replacing Thomas W. Krise who will retire on Aug. 5, 2023.



Enriquez

Six of the nine UOG regents voted Thursday, June 22, in favor of Enriquez and three voted in favor of Dr. Mary Okada, the president of Guam Community College.

Enriquez is current-

ly the senior vice president and provost at UOG.

"I'm looking forward to the future of the institution," said Enriquez, who will become the 12th UOG president.

Enriquez plans to use her expertise in strategic planning, human resources, and eco-

nomie development to make sure that her leadership will empower and engage with the students, faculty, administrators and staff, as well as the rest of the UOG community.

"The University of Guam's purpose is to improve upon our island's quality of life," she said, adding that she will work toward strengthening the university so that the institution will be more responsive to the needs of the students, the rest of the UOG community, and the broader island community. (PR)

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

DLNR sets partial closure of Garapan Fishing Base for LibDay fest

The Department of Lands and Natural Resources, in coordination with the Saipan Mayor's Office and the Liberation Day Committee, announced the closure of the Garapan Fishing Base during festival hours to prevent heavy traffic and trailers from being blocked. DLNR asks mariners to refrain from parking their trailers, boats, or vehicles to allow adequate parking for emergency vehicles, festival attendees, and coordinators.

The Garapan Fishing Base will be closed on the following dates:

- Tuesday, July 4, 2023, All Day
- Every Friday and Satur-

day from July 1, 2023, to July 22, 2023, from 5pm to 12am

■ Every Thursday and Sunday from July 1, 2023, to July 22, 2023, from 5pm to 10pm

During the month of July, DLNR encourages all mariners to use the Smiling Cove Marina.

For any questions, contact DLNR at 670-322-9834. (PR)

DPL to issue LibDay Parade roadside lot permits

The Department of Public Lands will be issuing permits for spots along the Liberation Day parade route beginning June 26, 2023.

Lots are limited and will be available on a first-come, first-served basis and limited to one lot per applicant. Lots will be reserved upon cash payment at the DPL office, second floor, Joeten Dandan

Building between Monday, June 26, 2023, through Friday, June 30, 2023, from 8am to 4pm.

DPL will have a map of available lots showcased in the reception area where applicants may choose their specific lots. The fee schedule is as follows:

- 10ft x 20ft = \$15
- 20ft x 20ft = \$20

Permit holders will be allowed to set up tents beginning at 1pm on July 3, 2023, and must clear out no later than July 5, 2023, at 12pm. Permits must be displayed in a visible area or readily available for enforcement personnel inspection.

For any questions, call DPL at 670-234-3751/52/53/54 or email dpl@dpl.gov.mp. (PR)

AIRFARE

From page 1

HNP and confirmed how future funds will be transferred throughout fiscal year 2023, or until Sept. 30, 2023.

"We will continue to work with CHCC, the CNMI Legislature, and other partners to help ensure the sustainability of the Health Network Program," Palacios said. "Access to quality healthcare, expanding healthcare workforce capacity, and addressing gaps

in healthcare coverage are top priorities for Lt. Gov. Apatang and I, and we will keep the community updated on the work and progress made on these efforts."

Muña said that CHCC is thankful for the additional funds that were transferred to CHCC and the administration's support for HNP. "The additional funding will enable us to provide more robust services to our patients and strengthens our commitment to the health and welfare of the CNMI," she added.

Since the transfer of the

Medical Referral Program to CHCC and the passage of Public Law 22-33, which created the HNP, there have been no changes in the regulations. However, the program exercises caution in its expenditures while adhering to the regulations.

Steps taken include clarifying ambiguities and updating the income eligibility, which determines who is eligible for benefits of the program—air transportation, accommodations, ground transportation, and subsistence. Recent

cost-cutting measures have included the termination of blocked rooms in Guam and Hawaii (this does not affect the eligible program participant's benefits for lodging coverage).

Yesterday's CHCC news release assured that it is working closely with the CNMI Executive Branch and lawmakers to ensure that program funding is available.

Reach an HNP staff member at (670) 323-1445 or email hsnp@chcc.health. (Saipan Tribune)

with BMV staff, including Deleon Guerrero.

There, Ivan would assist foreign citizens by serving as a translator and by submitting driver license applications on their behalf that included fraudulent immigration documents.

The United States says Deleon Guerrero was aware that Ivan was facilitating these illicit transactions and even directed five members of her staff to assist Ivan with fraudulent distribution of CNMI driver licenses to foreign citizens without lawful immigration status.

The defendant also communicated directly with Ivan to make appointments or other necessary arrangements to facilitate the fraudulent scheme.

Deleon Guerrero accepted payments from Ivan, and others, through cash of upwards of \$500.

In addition, the former director and five other members of the BMV were routinely treated to meals bought and paid for by Ivan.

PUA disbursement extended anew

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Department of Labor has been given another extension on its Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program, which would allow DOL to continue to adjudicate and disburse PUA to eligible beneficiaries past the end of this month.

Labor Secretary Leila Staffler said the U.S. Department of Labor has granted the CNMI's request for another extension on its PUA program. This means DOL will continue to adjudicate and disburse PUA funds for another year.

PUA was initially supposed to expire on June 30, 2022, but was extended to June 30, 2023. However, following the request for an extension, the program has been extended anew.

"We got a renewal for PUA. This month, PUA was supposed to come to an end but because we still have like 3,000 clients who have not received their money yet, and because of the long arduous process it takes to go through all of that, the U.S. government did give our PUA program an extension of another year so we are working diligently to continue trying to get those numbers as far down as we can," she said.

Staffler said she is hopeful her team will be able to get all eligible applicants their PUA benefits before the end of the extension. However, in the event that DOL can't, she assures the community that she will ask USDOL for another extension.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

SEIZURE

From page 1

Manglona ordered the U.S. Marshals Service last Tuesday to seize IPI's vehicles pursuant to granting USA Fanter's application for a writ of execution.

According to the court order, IPI owns motor vehicles that include heavy equipment with an estimated value of \$1,051,304.

However, the court says the vehicles may have depreciated in value over the last few years due to lack of maintenance.

In this case, USA Fanter sued IPI for failing to pay a construction staging lease agreement, a construction contract, quarry products, and heavy equipment rentals. USA Fanter sought over \$200,000 in damages.

Last year, the federal court struck IPI's answer to USA Fanter's complaint and found the casino investor in default.

USA Fanter also sued IPI for its failure to pay the full amount due under their construction contract for labor and materials provided for the improvement of IPI's real property in Garapan.

In that case, IPI had paid USA Fanter \$300,000 only and the unpaid balance due was not less than \$2,089,345.28.

In that lawsuit, the federal court issued a final judgment in favor of USA Fanter and later granted USA Fanter's request for a receivership. Clear Management was appointed to oversee the sale of IPI assets.

USA Fanter also won a defamation lawsuit against IPI and was awarded by the federal court \$500,000 in damages.

FLORES

From page 1

yesterday, June 22, 2023, for its water customers that are being served by the Dandan Tank Service Area. The "boil water" notice will remain in effect "until such time that CUC is able to provide results showing that the water meets Safe Drinking Water regulations."

This will affect CUC water customers in the areas of Tun Herman Pan Road (Airport Road), As Lito, Chalan Monsignor Martinez Road from the Shell Dandan Gas Station to ABCD Market in Koblerville, Tottotville, and portions of As Perdido and Koblerville.

In a letter to acting CUC executive director Betty G. Terlaje, Flores said that, although this may be a southern area supply notice, all water systems are interconnect-

ed, hence her effort to obtain some clarification.

The lawmaker asked for the contamination levels for perfluorooctaine sulfonate/perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOS/PFOA) in the affected area, what caused the contamination, and the harm it could cause to the community if not addressed immediately.

Flores chairs the House of Representatives Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee.

CUC's precautionary "boil water" notice yesterday warned that there is a possible contamination of the Dandan Water Tank. This prompted CUC to isolate the Dandan Water Tank, resulting in low water pressure to no water in the Dandan Tank Service Area of the water distribution system.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

EX-BMV

From page 1

appeared before the court for a change of plea hearing yesterday afternoon.

Kennedy accepted Deleon Guerrero's guilty plea and stated that she would recommend the matter for sentencing to U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona.

Pursuant to her plea agreement, Deleon Guerrero is looking at a between three-to-five-year sentence for her involvement in fraudulently producing over 50 licenses to undocumented individuals.

Deleon Guerrero will remain out of custody pending sentencing.

Robert Torres, who represents Deleon Guerrero, reiterated the judge's ruling in an interview following the hearing but added that Deleon Guerrero has pleaded guilty to her involvement in the fraudulent issuance of local licenses,

as opposed to the new Real ID licenses that would have resulted in more scrutiny from the federal government.

"There's a Real ID Act. That's a new statute that allows the use of driver's licenses for travel. However, based on the facts in this case, the driver's licenses that were produced as a result of Juana Deleon Guerrero's case were local, non-Real IDs," he said.

"Juana Deleon Guerrero entered a guilty plea pursuant to a plea agreement with the United States government. The parties' recommendation is a sentence of no greater than five years. Today the magistrate judge accepted the plea but will recommend her findings to the judge whether to accept the plea. Upon acceptance, the matter will be set for sentencing," he added.

Following the hearing, Kennedy unsealed the information filed against Deleon Guerrero.

According to the unsealed information, on or about Jan. 1, 2020, through about Dec. 20,

2022, on at least 50 occasions, Deleon Guerrero conspired with Li Yongde, or "Ivan," fellow BMV employees, residents of the CNMI without lawful immigration status, and others, to produce CNMI driver licenses unlawfully for 10 individuals without valid and current legal immigration status in the United States.

Specifically, Deleon Guerrero knowingly permitted Ivan, a citizen of the People's Republic of China without lawful immigration status, to bring other citizens of the PRC and of other nationalities without lawful immigration status to the BMV, where those foreign citizens were subsequently issued fraudulent CNMI driver licenses.

Ivan allegedly charged these individuals around \$1,500 to \$1,700 for a new license and around \$300 to \$400 for a renewal license.

Ivan would accept payments from foreign citizens and bring them to the BMV where they would meet



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<div style="background-color: yellow; padding: 2px 5px; font-weight: bold;">NOW</div> <div style="color: red; font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">\$18,995</div>  <div style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; font-weight: bold;">\$20,995</div> <p>2019 HONDA CIVIC LX STOCK # KE008071, FWD, AUTO 2.0L 4CYL ENGINE TYPE Est. Mileage: 36485, Color: COSMIC BLUE</p>	<div style="background-color: yellow; padding: 2px 5px; font-weight: bold;">NOW</div> <div style="color: red; font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">\$20,995</div>  <div style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; font-weight: bold;">\$21,995</div> <p>2020 KIA SOUL GT-LINE STOCK # L7117753, FWD, AUTO 2.0L 4CYL ENGINE Est. Mileage: 30,453, Color: GRAY</p>	<div style="background-color: yellow; padding: 2px 5px; font-weight: bold;">NOW</div> <div style="color: red; font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">\$22,888</div>  <div style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; font-weight: bold;">\$24,995</div> <p>2019 MAZDA CX9 SPORT STOCK # K0328985, FWD 2.5L 4CYL, AUTO Est. Mileage: 28,112, Color: SILVER</p>
<div style="background-color: yellow; padding: 2px 5px; font-weight: bold;">NOW</div> <div style="color: red; font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">\$22,888</div>  <div style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; font-weight: bold;">\$27,995</div> <p>2017 NISSAN FRONTIER SV STOCK # HN761936, 6 CYL - 4.0 L, 4WD Est. Mileage: 30,026, Color: BLACK</p>	<div style="background-color: yellow; padding: 2px 5px; font-weight: bold;">NOW</div> <div style="color: red; font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">\$23,888</div>  <div style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; font-weight: bold;">\$24,995</div> <p>2021 KIA SELTOS LX STOCK # M7196591, AWD, 4 CYL-2.0 L Est. Mileage: 13,980, Color: BLUE</p>	<div style="background-color: yellow; padding: 2px 5px; font-weight: bold;">NOW</div> <div style="color: red; font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">\$25,995</div>  <div style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; font-weight: bold;">\$27,995</div> <p>2016 FORD F150 XL SUPERCREW STOCK # GKE20631, 2WD, 3.5L 6CYL, AUTO Est. Mileage: 43,159, Color: WHITE</p>



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A Bayogo seed.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ogo: Repeal Rota ban on
export of Bayogo seeds

Rep. Julie Marie A. Ogo (Ind-Rota) believes the ban on the export of Bayogo seeds from Rota has now outlives its usefulness and must be repealed in order to boost economic activity on the island.

A news release yesterday from Ogo's office stated that, following several economic declines, Ogo recognized that the ban has out-

lived its usefulness and the law has become an obstacle to home economic development or small businesses and farmers who have wild Bayogos growing in abundance in their farm fields or nearby jungle.

The 13th Rota Legislative Delegation enacted the law to ban the export of raw Bayogo from Rota as a means to protect this resource from exploitation. When the tourism industry was flourishing in the CNMI, it saw a lot of imported arts and crafts that were similar if not replicas of local arts and crafts.



“Eventually, we saw our local arts and crafts drop out of our local tourist markets,” the news release stated, and one of those arts and crafts that fell victim to this was the arts and crafts created from Bayogo, known in English as St. Thomas (large seed) and Sea Bean (small seed).

“Rota has been hit hard the most in every economic downturn, because of its distance from the rest of the Northern Mariana Islands and prohibitive travel costs, and instead of waiting for tourist arrivals on Rota to buy arts and crafts, the people can export raw Bayogos and earn a living subsistence or start creating arts and crafts for export to where the tourists are or take advantage of the technology and market their products online,” Ogo said.

For these reasons, Ogo has drafted a Rota local bill repealing Public Law 13-22 that bans Bayogo export so the Rota people can begin engaging in the Bayogo exporting business, and is currently working on a proposal to ban the importation of raw Bayogo or any of its processed form, for 15 years until the local arts and crafts or hand or machine manufactured goods from Bayogo is comfortably nestled in the market.

“I hope that this will work in tandem with the Investment Incentive Reform Act of 2023 (H.B 23-53) that I introduced and P.L. 20-86 establishing the CNMI Product Seal and begin to see a budding exporting industry come to fruition,” she said.

For anyone interested in contributing ideas, email Ogo's office at kuentosmarianas@gmail.com. (Saipan Tribune)



Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands
STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

P.O. Box 10007 | Saipan, MP 96950 | Phone: (670) 664-1712
Email: cnmiswdb@dol.gov.mp

VISION: “To integrate a seamless workforce development system that meets the needs of employers, job-seekers, workers, and youths in order to supply quality employees for the dynamic economy of the CNMI.”

In accordance with Public Law 8-41, Section 11(a), the CNMI State Workforce Development Board hereby gives notice that it will hold its Program Year (PY) 2022 4th Quarter General Membership meeting on June 26, 2023 from 9:00am – 12:00pm at the Hyatt Regency, Giovanni's Room

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Review & Adoption of Agenda of June 26, 2023
- IV. Review & Adoption of Meeting Minutes of October 25, 2022
- V. Public Comments
- VI. WIOA Core Programs Report
- VII. Board Member Orientation
- VIII. Election of Officers
- IX. Committee Appointments
- X. Program Year 2023 Meeting Schedule
- XI. Announcements
- XII. Next Meeting
- XIII. Adjournment

/s/ **Velma Ann Palacios** Chairperson

ACCOMMODATIONS

Individuals who require accommodations are requested to contact the Department of Labor Workforce Investment Agency at 670.664.1708/1717 at least 72 hours prior to the meeting in order to ensure the availability of the requested accommodation.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public is welcome to comment on any agenda item. Public comments may be made by:

- Email to cnmiswdb@dol.gov.mp an hour before the meeting start time. The subject line shall identify the date of the meeting followed by the agenda item being addressed.
- Oral testimonies in-person at the meeting.

Timely submission of public comments will be read aloud during the public comment segment of the agenda and made available to the public in compliance with Public Law 8-41.

This publication is supported by the Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor as part of Program Year 2020 award totaling \$1,523,110 with 0 percent financed from non-governmental sources.

MISSION: Empowering, integrating, implementing, and innovating the workforce needs of the CNMI.”

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Job Title: Refrigeration Mechanic
Hours: Full-Time

Duties and Responsibilities:

Install and repair industrial and commercial refrigerating systems. Observe and test system operation, using gauges and instruments. Adjust valves according to specifications and charge system with proper type of refrigerant by pumping the specified gas or fluid into the system. Test lines, components, and connections for leaks. Dismantle malfunctioning systems and test components using electrical or mechanical equipment. Adjust or replace worn or defective mechanisms and parts and reassemble repaired systems. Perform mechanical overhaul and refrigerant reclaiming. Install wiring to connect components to an electrical power source. Mount compressor, condenser, and components in specified locations, using hand tools, power tools, or acetylene welding equipment. Do other duties as assigned.

Qualification Requirements:

High school graduate with two years work experience as a Refrigeration Mechanic. Must be EPA Certified. Must have a valid driver's license. Able to monitor gauges, dials, and other indicators to make sure machines and equipment are working properly. Able to use hand tools and power tools including acetylene-welding equipment. Can lift heavy objects occasionally. Self-driven, hardworking, and can work independently.

Job Title: Mechanic
Hours: Full-Time

Duties and Responsibilities:

Repair automobiles, trucks, and other vehicles. Repair, reline, replace, and adjust brakes. Examine vehicles to determine extent of damage or malfunctions. Align vehicles' front ends. Tear down, repair, and rebuild faulty assemblies, such as power systems, steering systems, and linkages. Perform routine and scheduled maintenance services, such as oil changes, lubrication, and tune-ups. Plan work procedures, using charts, technical manuals, and experience. Follow checklists to ensure all important parts are examined, including belts, hoses, steering systems, spark plugs, brake and fuel systems, wheel bearings, and other potentially troublesome areas. Maintain cleanliness of work area. Repair radiator leaks. Repair and service air conditioning, heating, engine cooling, and electrical systems. Disassemble units and inspect parts for wear, using micrometers, calipers, and gauges. Overhaul or replace carburetors, blowers, generators, distributors, starters, and pumps. Repair or replace parts such as pistons, rods, gears, valves, and bearings. Rewire ignition systems, lights, and instrument panels. Repair manual and automatic transmissions. Repair or replace shock absorbers. Replace and adjust headlights. Install and repair accessories, such as radios, heaters, mirrors, and windshield wipers. Rebuild parts, such as crankshafts and cylinder blocks.



Qualification Requirements:

High school graduate with two years work experience as a vehicle mechanic. Knowledge of machines and tools, including their designs, uses, repair, and maintenance. Ability to use acetylene/cutting torches, dial calipers, drill/punch presses, handheld diagnostic computers, and bleeder/flare nut/pump/slug wrenches. Ability to diagnose gauges, dials, or other indicators to make sure a machine is working properly.

Company: Yaong Corporation
Location: Unit 6 Rem Center, Gualo Rai, Saipan, MP 96950

To apply:

Please send complete and detailed resume to: Yaong Corporation Unit 6 Rem Ctr. Cheribiyen Dr Gualo Rai, Saipan, or mail to P.O. Box 505946, Saipan, MP 96950, or by e-mail to yaong.hr2@gmail.com. Background check may be required prior to employment

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DIAMOND G CALROSE RICE 50 LBS  \$49⁹⁹	SAPPORO ICHIBAN ORIGINAL RAMEN 24/3.5oz  \$13⁹⁹ /cs.	PURISS WATER 20/350ml  \$5⁵⁰ /cs.	HAWAIIAN SUN DRINKS 12pk  \$9⁹⁹	JOETEN BUTANE GAS 4pk  \$25⁹⁹ /cs.

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US CHOICE BRISKET CUT STRIPS  \$5⁹⁹ /lb.	US CHOICE STRIPLOIN NY STEAK  \$14³⁹ /lb.	US CHOICE BOTTOM ROUND STEAK  \$5²⁹ /lb.	US CHOICE FLANK STEAK / LB  \$12³⁹ /lb.	EED FROZEN STRAWBERRY SLICED 15z  \$2⁹⁹	SIMPLIOT HASH BROWN 20ct 22.5z  \$4⁴⁵	WEICHUAN SAUSAGE 12z WEICHUAN SAUSAGE SWEET 12z  \$6²⁹ ea.	

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Although Joeten strives to ensure that all pricing information on this ad is accurate, occasionally an error may occur and goods may be mispriced. We reserve the right to correct all typographical and pictorial errors.

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HANMI/NMTECH Bistek Cookoff at 'Taste'

A local favorite will be in the spotlight at this Saturday's 24th Annual Taste of the Marianas International Food Festival & Beer Garden in Saipan, as the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands and Northern Marianas Technical Institute co-host the HANMINMTECH Chamorro Bistek Cookoff.

The festival kicks off at 5pm at Garapan Fishing Base. Current and former student's chefs of the NMTECH Culinary program will have minutes to serve up the best dish featuring Certified Angus Beef.



MVA

Shirley's Coffee Shop serves patrons at the 24th Annual Taste of the Marianas International Food Festival & Beer Garden on June 17, 2023, at Garapan Fishing Base, Saipan.



MVA

Contestants, organizers, and judges take a commemorative photo at Budweiser's King of the Grill contest during the 24th Annual Taste of the Marianas International Food Festival & Beer Garden on

Chamorro bistek," said MVA managing director Christopher A. Concepcion. "We want to thank HANMI and NMTECH for being important partners of the MVA, both for this weekend's contest and—more broadly—in making the Marianas a great place to visit with a high standard of service. This final night of 'Taste' will bring together all the best of that!"

This Saturday's entertainment lineup will be: Big Jay (5pm), WD40 (6pm), Simiyan Marianas (7pm), Tiul Belau (7:30pm), Oceania Athletics Asso. Masters Championship Award Ceremony (8pm), Petlas Marianas (8:30 a.m.), Flores Sinsar (9pm), CAB Dancers (9:30pm,) and Northern Star (10pm).

At last Saturday's Budweiser King of the Grill 2023, topping the ribs category were Michael Guerrero in first place, Suaad San Nicolas in second place, and Alexander Standish in third place. Winning in the People's Choice steak category were Juan Ogarto in first place, Alexander Standish in second place, and Byron Castro in third place.

For festival goes wanting to skip the festival token booth line, tokens can be purchased before Saturday at the Marianas Visitors Authority office, first floor, Gold Beach Hotel, Beach Road, Saipan, from 1pm to 4pm Monday through Friday (except holidays). Individuals wanting to purchase tokens before Saturday may do so with cash at the MVA office or with PayPal or credit/debit card at www.mymarianas.com (select "Pay via PayPal.") for pickup at the MVA office or in the expedited line at the token booth at the festival grounds.

Participating food vendors this year are Bistro Boyz 670, Chagi Norf, Chow Time, Cristianos Kitchen, Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, Furusato Restaurant Saipan, Herman's Modern Bakery, Island Grinz, Java Joe's, Kamakazee's, Kinpachi Japanese Restaurant, Saipan Cup Bab, Restaurant Loco & Taco, Majesty Restaurant, Mariana Lighthouse, Matty's BBQ, Pho Tam, Oh My Grill – OMG - Saipan, Shirley's Coffee Shop, Surf Club Saipan/Great Harvest Bread Co. Saipan, T-Bar CNMI, The Hut, Tyler's Gelatte Stone, and Vi-lynn's BBQ. Drink vendors are MARPAC, WESTCO and Napu Brewing.

The event is co-organized by the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands. Platinum sponsors are *Marianas Variety*, Dave Electronics, and Turnkey Solutions. Gold sponsor is Hawaiian Rock Products. Silver sponsor is Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan. Bronze sponsors are EST Rental, Jonny's Bar & Grill, New XO Market, Triple J Five Star Wholesale, M&C LLC Construction, Joeten Enterprises, and NMTECH. (MVA)



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COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED ON THE MUNIS VENDOR SELF SERVICE PORTAL (<https://self-service.dof.gov.mp/vss/>) OR AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT BLDG NO. 12552, ANATAHAN DRIVE, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-305, 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ PATRICK C. GUERRERO /S/ BRIEN S. NICHOLAS JR.
GOVERNOR'S AUTHORIZED ACTING DIRECTOR, PS
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PUBLIC NOTICE
Friday, June 9, 2023

Through its Board of Directors, the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority (CEDA), grants a three-month (90-day) automatic loan payment deferral for all **ROTA CEDA LOAN CLIENTS/BUSINESS OWNERS** from June 2023 to August 31, 2023.

Three-month (90-day) Loan Deferral Details:

- The deferred loan payments are added to the end of the loan.
- Customers need to remember that, eventually, they must make those payments.
- Restart your loan payments, on or by the due date, in the month of September 2023.
- Interest will accrue during the three-month loan payment deferral period (Loan interest rates range from a low of 2% to a max of 9%—with rates averaging 7%).
- The loan deferral period will not cure any delinquent past-due amounts.
- No action is required by borrowers to defer their loan payments, except, for those borrowers with scheduled automatic monthly loan payments (via debit/credit card), please contact us to temporarily cease those payments for all or part of the deferral.

Here's our contact info:
CEDA Loan Team

Abby Atalig	a.atalig@developcnmi.com	(670) 234-6245 ext. 309
Fred Cruz	f.cruz@developcnmi.com	ext. 305
Marie Coleman	m.coleman@developcnmi.com	ext. 307

Rota office
Elaine M. Manglona e.manglona@developcnmi.com (670) 532-9408

Or please visit us at the CEDA Building, room 103 (ground floor), located on San Jose Beach Road (across from The Shack & Oleai Beach Bar & Grill).

Please contact us at the above if we may be of further assistance.

/s/ **Manuel A. Sablan**
CEDA Executive Director


Cash prizes await the winners: \$750 for first place, \$500 for second place, and \$250 for third place. The event is also sponsored by Triple J Super-Fresh and Truckload Store.

The Taste of the Marianas,

the largest food festival in the Marianas and an annual signature event of the Marianas Visitors Authority. The festival offers affordable dishes from local hotels and restaurants, live entertainment, and arts and


crafts sales beginning at 5pm and closing at 11pm, an hour later on this final night.

"We're super excited about this weekend's festival feature of a local favorite both at home and at parties—the juicy, tender



COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

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AMENDED NOTICE TO BIDDERS

The COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY (CPA) is inviting qualified contractors to submit bid proposals and their qualifications for the **FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT COMMUTER ACCESS ROAD PAVING, COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS, PROJECT NO. CPA-SA-007-18 (AIP PENDING)**, for the island of Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Bidders are to submit one original and two copies of their bid which shall be sealed in an envelope and marked on the cover package outside as follows: **"Commuter Access Road Paving Project", Project No. CPA-SA-007-18 (AIP PENDING)** and submitted no later than **2:00 P.M. (CHST), FRIDAY, JULY 7, 2023**, to the Office of the Executive Director, 2nd floor of the Arrival Terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, at which time and place the sealed proposals will be publicly opened and read.

The Project, in general, consists of Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport Commuter Access Road Paving all in accordance with the plans and specifications.

The Project is being financed by funds from the (FAA) Federal Aviation Administration. The contract award, if it is to be made, will be made within ninety (90) calendar days from the receipt of bids. CPA reserves the right to hold such bids in effect for one hundred twenty (120) calendar days from the date of bid opening.

A DVD containing the Contract Documents including plans, specifications, and the bid schedule, can be obtained at the CPA Accounting Office, 2nd floor of the Departure Terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, beginning **1:00 p.m., Monday, June 5, 2023**, upon the payment of **ONE HUNDRED FIFTY U.S. DOLLARS (\$150.00)** for each set of plans and documents. The payment is nonrefundable unless bids are canceled. Payment shall be made in cash, credit card, cashier's check or U.S. postal money order payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority. Bidders should notify CPA's point of contact mentioned below immediately if there are issues retrieving the files on the DVD and are to verify all information using the specification table of contents and the index of drawings.

A pre-bid conference will be held at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, at **10:00 A.M. (CHST), MONDAY, JUNE 12, 2023**, at the Saipan Airport Conference Room to explain and clarify any questions regarding this project. Attendance is not mandatory. A site visit will follow the pre-bid conference.

Questions should be submitted in writing to the CPA Executive Director's Office, 2nd floor of the Arrival Terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or emailed to Ms. Wendi L. Prater, Executive Assistant/Project Manager at wprater@cnmiports.com at least ten (10) days prior to the bid opening date; with the exception of extension requests which have no deadline. Responses to all questions and requests for information will be provided to all bidders who purchased a DVD and attended the pre-bid conference.

Bidders shall use the bid schedule form furnished by the Commonwealth Ports Authority on the DVD. Each bidder should supply all supplemental information required in the specifications.

The contract period for construction of the project shall be **TWO HUNDRED TEN (210) CALENDAR DAYS**. Liquidated damages in the amount of **FIVE HUNDRED U.S. DOLLARS (\$500.00)** per calendar days shall be assessed the contractor if the completion of the Project is delayed beyond the contract time without excuse.

The apparent low bidder will be subject to a thorough and comprehensive review of its qualifications and Bid Documents to ensure that they are "responsive and responsible." This review will include, but is not necessarily limited to previous project experience, financial capabilities, quality of equipment and personnel, and bonding and insurance. If the apparent low bidder is found not to be "responsive or responsible", their bid will be rejected and the next lowest bidder will be evaluated for qualifications.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals submitted for: (a) any of the reasons set forth in this Notice to Bidders; or (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding bid rejection or cancellation; (c) any calculation error made in the bid schedule or mis-enter of the quantity of line item; or (d) sufficient justification exists that awarding the project contract would not be in the best interest of CPA. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said bids if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest.

Each bid shall be accompanied by either a bid bond by a U.S. Treasury listed or CPA approved surety company, a certified check, or a cashier's check in the amount not less than ten percent (10%) of the bid price. Checks shall be made payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

All mechanics and laborers for this procurement project shall be paid no less than the minimum wage rate established by the CNMI or the U.S. Secretary of Labor, whichever is higher. A copy of the Department of the Federal Labor Wage Rate Determination is included in Section GP 70-28 of the specifications. The bidder shall take into account minimum wage increases that may be imposed in the CNMI over the life of the Contract and include associated costs in the bid proposal. The EEO requirements, labor provisions, and wage rates are included in the specifications.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority, in accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252, 42 USC §§ 2000d to 2000d-4) and the Regulations, hereby notifies all bidders or offerors that it will affirmatively ensure that any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprises will be afforded full and fair opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award.

The United States Secretary of Transportation has granted the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands an exemption from the requirements of the Department of Transportation's Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) regulation, which later became the Department of Transportation's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program, as it relates to FAA grant programs. The Secretary of Transportation has not determined that a portion of those requirements should be reinstated.

By submitting a bid/proposal under this solicitation, the bidder or offeror certifies that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred or suspended by any Federal department or agency from participation in this transaction.

In addition to the above, all bidders shall comply with all other Federal requirements under this procurement, including but not limited to Buy American Preference, Foreign Trade Restriction, Davis Bacon, Veteran's Preference, Affirmative Action and Government wide Debarment and Suspension and Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-free Workplace. Further details on all Federal requirements are provided in the specifications.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY:

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date: June 22, 2023

PIC Saipan rated as 'Travelers' Choice Best of the Best'

Pacific Island Club Saipan, operated by E-Land Park's overseas hotel and resort corporation, Micronesia Resort Inc., was awarded the best family-friendly hotel on Saipan on May 23, 2023, by the world's largest travel site, TripAdvisor.com.

TripAdvisor's "2023 Travelers' Choice Best of the Best"

is based on reviews from travelers around the world in a 12-month period, and less than 1% of 8 million hotels in the world are awarded this honor. PIC Saipan's accomplishment is very meaningful in that it was selected through actual customer ratings with guaranteed factual reliability.

PIC Saipan's various activi-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Pacific Island Club Saipan has a water park with extra-large water slides, a lazy river, and over 40 sports and recreational activities, plus the only artificial wave surf in the Western Pacific.

IT&E, CBMA at SCC July general membership meeting

Presenters from telecommunications firm IT&E and the Commonwealth Bureau of Military Affairs will be the featured speakers at the Saipan Chamber of Commerce general membership meeting on July 5 at the Hyatt Regency Saipan Ballroom.

This meeting, scheduled to take place from 11:30am to 1:30pm, will also feature updates from Chamber committees and the introduction of new interns at the SCC office.

IT&E, a local leading telecommunications provider, will be the spotlight presenter during the meeting. They will unveil their latest Managed IT and Cloud Services, showcasing cutting-edge technology and its potential benefits for businesses in the CNMI. This presentation will offer Chamber members a unique opportunity to explore the advancements in cloud services and how they can optimize their storage capabilities.

The CBMA will have a presenter who will share valuable insights about the Innovative Readiness Training program and its five medical missions happening next month. Exclusive to the United States and its territories, IRT is a Department of Defense military training opportunity aimed at increasing deployment readiness. Attendees will gain a comprehensive understanding of the joint training opportunities that IRT offers and its significance for the CNMI.

In addition to these informative presentations, the Saipan Chamber of Commerce will introduce its new interns during the meeting. These talented individuals will work closely with the Chamber over the next seven weeks as part of its 2023 Career Exploration Internship Program. The introduction of the interns symbolizes the Chamber's commitment to nurturing and developing the local workforce, and their presence will bring fresh perspectives and energy to the Chamber's initiatives.

Moreover, Chamber committees will provide updates on their activities and progress, highlighting the signifi-

cant contributions they make to the business community. Attendees will have the opportunity to stay informed about the Chamber's ongoing projects and engage with committee representatives to learn more about their respective focuses.

The registration fee for Chamber members is \$25, while future Chamber members are welcome to attend for a fee of \$35. This fee covers attendance, networking opportunities, access to presentations, and a delicious lunch.

Chamber members, business leaders, and community stakeholders are encouraged to attend the July general membership meeting to stay connected, gain industry insights, and contribute to the growth of the CNMI business community.

For more information and to RSVP for the July general membership meeting, visit the Saipan Chamber of Commerce website at www.saipanchamber.com or contact the Chamber directly at (670) 234-7150 or email contact@saipanchamber.org. (PR)

ty contents and auxiliary facilities, is the significant reason for its' new-found title among the world's exclusive hotels.

PIC Saipan has more than 300 rooms, which includes rooms with stunning sunset ocean view, the only artificial wave surf in the Western Pacific, a water park with extra-large water slides, a lazy river, and over 40 sports and recreational activities. Families with children

and young adults indulge in PIC Saipan's super-large water slides at the water park, and families with parents prefer therapeutic activities such as sunset barbecue, kayaking, and sailing.

PIC Saipan's daily activities for family and children are the most notable appraisal. The PIC Saipan International English Club is a two- or three-days child(ren) course of English lessons con-

ducted by certified English instructors. To complement the program PIC Saipan also offers fun-filled activities with PIC Clubmates in the Kids' Club. This allows the parents to spend quality alone time while their children are enjoying themselves in the Waterpark while supervised. To cap off the night, families are able to enjoy nightly activities, such as campfire, pool party, and beach games, to name a few.

"I am delighted to receive such recognition from guests

» **PIC Saipan is first hotel in the CNMI to receive TripAdvisor.com rating**



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 23 – 084

Opening Date: Tuesday, June 13, 2023
Closing Date: Tuesday, June 27, 2023

POSITION TITLE:	Fiscal Assistant
DEPARTMENT:	Tinian Administration
LOCATION:	Tinian, Northern Marianas Islands, USA
ANNUAL SALARY:	\$16,742.00 to \$22,602.00 per annum, Non-Exempt
CONTRACT:	Not Contracted
POSITION(S):	One (1)

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Resident Manager or his/her designee. This class specification represents only the core areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on the needs of the department.

Duties:

- Updates and verifies customer account or work order information; enters and balances payment data; prepares timekeeping records; may work in the field obtaining and entering customer utility meter information, and replacing or disconnecting utility meters and services.
- Receives customer payments; balances and records cash and other payment receipts; verifies receipts against payment system data; and prepares deposits.
- Monitors and updates customer account information; researches account discrepancies or unusual meter readings; calculates payment information for past-due accounts, new installations and security deposits; reports research findings; and/or follows up on service or work order status.
- Greets customers or receives calls; responds to customer inquiries such as account balance information, payment due dates, minimum payment amounts due or general information inquiries; refers customers to appropriate resources.
- Copies and scans documents; maintains and organizes files records, reports and accounting transaction documentation.
- Updates and maintains spreadsheet reports; prepares fiscal transaction reports or other work activity reports.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:

Education: High School Diploma or General Education Diploma or Adult Basic Education Program.

Knowledge of: Cash handling practices (based on assignment); Customer service principles; Basic mathematical principles; Recordkeeping principles; Safety principles and safe work practices; Applicable equipment used in field utility services (based on assignment); Modern office technology.

Skills in: Receiving, posting and reconciling payments, cash receipts or account information; Verifying and updating account or utility meter information; Providing customer service and responding to inquiries; Coordinating services with other departments or resources; Inspecting and operating field equipment related to utility usage (based on assignment); Performing basic mathematical calculations; Researching account information or discrepancies; Preparing and maintaining files, forms, reports and records; Copying and scanning documents; Updating, maintaining and preparing reports and spreadsheet tracking documents; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org.

P. O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131
CUC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

who have visited PIC Saipan," said Dennis Seo, general manager of PIC Saipan. "This recognition is superb and would not have been possible without the untiring commitment and dedication of PIC Saipan employees. We will continue to make efforts to provide a variety of activities and entertainment for all our guests and continue to promote PIC Saipan as a family-friendly resort for all to enjoy. ... As a hotelier, I hope this award attracts the attention of travelers around the world, so that they find that there are many quality hotels available in Saipan, and that we are an exceptional destination for tourists to visit." (PR)

MICHAEL A. WHITE, ESQ., F0122
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ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

NORTHERN MARIANAS : CIVIL ACTION
HOUSING CORPORATION, : NO. 18-0410

Plaintiff,

-v-

RAMON S. DELA CRUZ AND :
REBECCA C. DELA CRUZ, :
Defendants. :

FIRST AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on October 14, 2022, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendant in and to the following property:

Legal description of the property:

Lot no. 001 G 74, containing an area of 729 square meters, more or less, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat no. 001 G03, the original of which was recorded 20 March 1986 as Document no. 86-0510 at the Commonwealth Recorder's Office, Saipan.

Total area of the property:

729 square meters

Known encumbrances:

A mortgage in favor of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, July 21, 2023, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public. A copy of a title insurance report for the property is available to any prospective bidder upon request. A copy of the mortgage in favor of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, a plat map showing boundaries of the above-described property, a map of the property's location in Saipan, a copy of this Notice, and a copy of the Court's Order of October 14, 2022, are available for inspection and copying at the offices of the undersigned. Prospective bidders can view and inspect the property at any time during normal business hours. The sale may be postponed by the undersigned at any time.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

Additional Terms and Conditions. A deposit of 10% of the successful bid is payable to the undersigned by the close of business on the date of sale, and the balance of the successful bid is to be paid within three (3) working days thereafter. The purchase price will be held in escrow pending approval of the sale by the Court. The sale is subject to the Court's approval. Upon approval by the Court, a Certificate of Sale will be issued to the successful purchaser upon satisfying the terms of payment. The sale is also subject to statutory redemption rights of 12 months following the date of sale. If the property is not redeemed during the redemption period, a Quitclaim Deed will issue, conveying title to the purchaser.

DATED, this 1st day of May, 2023:

/s/
MICHAEL A. WHITE, Auctioneer

ROBERT T. TORRES, ESQ.

Attorney at Law

P.O. Box 500730 CK

Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
Saipan, MP 96950

Tel: (670) 234-7859

Fax: (670) 234-5749

Attorney for Plaintiff Marianas Public Land Trust

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

MARIANAS PUBLIC

LAND TRUST,

Plaintiff,

vs.

EDWIN B. TUDELA and

PATRICIA A. TUDELA,

and

PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

OF CHRIST

through its representative,

Pastor Clariza S. Warde,

Successor in Interest,

Defendants.

NOTICE OF HEREBY GIVEN that on July 31, 2023, at 1:30 p.m., a hearing will be held before the Honorable Judge Kenneth L. Govendo on Plaintiff's Motion for Default Judgment in the above-captioned matter, at the Superior Court for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands ("CNMI"), Guma Hustisia, Civic Center, Saipan, CNMI.

Dated this 12th day of May 2023.

/s/

Clerk of Court/ Deputy Clerk of Court

Opinion

Hafa Adair

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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EDITORIAL

A generational shift on guns

New polling shows trouble ahead for Republican politicians who continue blocking any attempt at rational restrictions on guns: Young conservatives of the kind the GOP will increasingly need in the future are far more open to required psychological exams for gun purchasers and other firearms limits than are their older conservative counterparts.

The reason is hardly mysterious: Gen Z—including its more right-leaning members—have all grown up in a country drowning in gun violence thanks to older conservatives' stubborn resistance to even the mildest gun-safety proposals.

Mass school shootings have become such a routine part of American life that it's easy to forget it hasn't always been like this. The start of this dark era is generally put at 1999, the year of the Columbine High School massacre in Colorado, which left 15 dead.

As the nation reeled from the shock of what was then a singular tragedy, a barrage of new firearms restrictions were proposed in Congress. As the debate wore on, it soon became apparent that even this horrific demonstration of the dangers of America's loose gun laws couldn't budge lawmakers held in thrall to the gun lobby.

It was the same story a little over a dozen years later, when 20 small children and six adults died in 2012 at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. By then, mass shootings were becoming more common, but this one was uniquely soul-searing. Many assumed the country would finally stop the insanity and impose reasonable restrictions on weapons of war in civilian hands. It didn't.

The rare has become common. In each of the past three years there have been, nationally, more than 600 mass shootings (defined as four victims or more), many of them in schools. This year has seen 200 so far.

In fact, school shootings have become so common that there have been multiple recent reports of the same young people surviving two of them, years and miles apart.

That phenomenon, as much as any other, might finally move the needle.

As Politico reported earlier this month, several recent polls have confirmed that young conservatives as a whole don't share their older counterparts' stubborn opposition to gun restrictions. A Harvard poll in the spring found a majority of young conservatives favored mandatory psychological examinations as a condition of purchasing guns.

A separate YouGov poll in March showed millennial and Gen Z Republicans are open to more gun restrictions generally and that that support has grown.

As the chairman of the Texas Young Republican Federation told the website: "There are some concerns from Gen Z voters specifically, mainly because they've had to deal with it more growing up—it's become more rampant in society."

It's telling that prominent conservatives can acknowledge such a disturbing fact while still maintaining the party's unreasonable refusal to even discuss reforms like limits on high-capacity magazines, red-flag laws and universal background checks. That's how thoroughly the party, and too much of the country, has come to view these horrors as inevitable.

They aren't. And the fact many young conservatives, at least, seem to understand that provides a glimmer of hope for the future.

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An easy congressional fix can help families in the SNAP program

Among Congress' 2023 action items is the massive Farm Bill, legislation that is reauthorized every five years. The bill includes federal assistance for low-income families like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the principal method by which the U.S. government helps low-income families buy food.

As is necessary in a sweeping program that covers 41 million Americans, there are important rules about what is covered and what is not. And while some restrictions are necessary and uncontroversial—for example SNAP benefits cannot be used to purchase beer, wine, liquor, cigarettes, or tobacco—other rules create unnecessary and illogical barriers for the very people the program is meant to help.

One such barrier with SNAP benefits is the restriction on purchasing hot foods.

The nearly 50 year-old rule prohibits SNAP participants from purchasing foods like rotisserie chicken, hot sandwiches, oatmeal, or soup. When the restriction was put in place decades ago, Americans mostly prepared their meals at home from scratch and hot foods were not as prevalent or accessible. But today, the flexibility of being able to purchase hot meals at grocery and convenience stores is something that the majority of Americans benefit from and may even often count on.

This restriction on hot foods can be especially burdensome for working families who may not have the time or resources to prepare meals at home. For example, a working mom may be able to purchase a package of raw chicken from the grocery store using her SNAP benefits, but she cannot purchase a rotisserie chicken, which would be a quick and easy meal solution for her family. She may be able to pick up a cold sandwich from the convenience store on the way home from work, but she cannot have it toasted, which limits her options for what might be a warm and satisfying meal.

The hot foods restriction is not a cost issue—important for those rightfully concerned with the effects of government spending. SNAP benefits can be used to purchase prepared cold foods—in many cases the exact same food—with the only difference being the food's temperature at the precise moment of purchased.

Indeed, retailers are forced to find ways to deal with the distinctions that are downright silly, awkward, or even wasteful. For example, most convenience stores these days have microwave ovens for customer use and have to warn customers that the sandwich they are picking up cannot be purchased with

By **MARIO H. LOPEZ**

The Fulcrum

Mario H. Lopez is president of the Hispanic Leadership Fund, a public policy advocacy organization that promotes liberty, opportunity and prosperity for all Americans.



SNAP benefits if they choose to heat it up before purchase. Similarly, soup, of all things, must be bought cold. In situations where there is no sign, or if the customer doesn't notice it, mistakenly heats up an item, and can only pay for their food with SNAP, then the store cannot resell the food and has little choice but to throw out the item.

Additionally, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which administers the SNAP program, already recognizes the importance of hot foods during times of natural disasters, such as hurricanes, tornadoes, or wildfires, and has allowed for the purchase of hot foods with SNAP benefits during those times. This waiver shows that removing the restriction on hot foods can make a meaningful difference in the lives of SNAP families.

The hot food restriction is a cumbersome regulation that gratuitously takes away flexibility and convenience for families at a time when we are facing record levels of food insecurity. In some cases people who rely on SNAP benefits may not have the time to cook or may even lack access to a kitchen. Of the 22 million families on SNAP, 70% have children, are elderly, or have disabilities.

As president of the Hispanic Leadership Fund, a non-partisan advocacy organization, I witness all too often how both partisanship and government bureaucracy get in the way of even basic, uncontroversial policy. Congress has an opportunity to address this and remove the unnecessary restriction on hot foods in the 2023 Farm Bill. Modernizing the SNAP program is a simple fix that would make a real difference to participating families who are already facing challenges putting food on the table. And, even in an age where extreme partisanship and divisiveness seemingly plague every aspect of legislation, common-sense solutions, even if modest compared to larger issues, can serve as important building blocks to help the country at large.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Forcing rape victims to pay for emergency medical care is devastating and cruel

In the summer of 2021, a woman seeking an abortion came to the Texas clinic where I worked as a physician. She'd been raped and was 15 weeks pregnant. I was the first medical provider she had seen since being assaulted. She told me she hadn't gone to the emergency room after her rape because she was uninsured and afraid of racking up a huge medical bill.

It was not the first time I've heard such a story.

Immediate medical care after a rape—usually delivered in emergency rooms—is essential to the health and recovery of victims of sexual violence. In many ERs, specially trained nurses perform forensic exams to collect evidence for use in a prosecution if the attacker is ever caught. In most cases, the federal Violence Against Women Act—a law that's supposed to protect survivors of sexual violence—pays for the forensic exam through state-run victim compensation funds.

But a forensic exam is far from the only medical service rape victims need. They need medications to prevent serious sexually transmitted infections such as HIV, and sometimes they need repair of injuries such as vaginal or rectal lacerations. They often need mental health treatment and usually need emergency contraception to prevent pregnancy.

Since the federal law doesn't cover the full range of necessary services, getting them can be financially catastrophic for victims. As my colleagues and I reported in a study in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, victims of sexual violence are often expected to pay for at least some of their care out of pocket, and that presents a powerful disincentive for women to seek care at a time they desperately need it.

We analyzed more than 35 million ER visits and identified 112,716 survivors of recent sexual assaults in 2019. More than 17,000 of the victims we identified were expected to pay out

of pocket for their ER care; they were charged an average of \$3,673. Even privately insured survivors paid, on average, 14% of the total costs of their ER care (more than \$900), because most private coverage carries copayments and deductibles, and many ERs are “out of network.” These are steep costs for most people, but particularly for the low-income women and girls who most frequently suffer sexual assaults.

I cared for my Texas patient a few weeks before that state's six-week abortion ban took effect, so she could choose whether to terminate her pregnancy. That choice is no longer available in Texas. In the year since *Roe vs. Wade* was overturned, legislators there and in eight other states—Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Tennessee—have outlawed all abortions, even for pregnancies resulting from rape.

“Rape exceptions” were once the norm in anti-abortion states, and even in today's brutal post-*Roe* environment, a few Republican lawmakers can't stomach forcing rape survivors to carry the pregnancy for nine months. The abortion bans in Idaho, West Virginia and Mississippi include nominal exceptions for rape survivors. But to actually obtain an abortion in those states, victims are typically required to report the crime to the police and prove they have received rape-related medical examinations.

Those innocuous-sounding requirements hide a hard truth. For many survivors, getting medical care after rape comes with an impossible price tag. Knowing they can't afford a \$3,600 medical bill, they will never seek care at all.

At the very least, the Violence Against Women Act should be amended to ensure that state victim compensation funds cover all essential medical care for rape survivors, not just forensic exams. And all states—including those with abortion bans—should ensure that abortion care is actually accessi-

By **SAMUEL DICKMAN**

Los Angeles Times

Samuel Dickman is a physician, researcher and the chief medical officer of Planned Parenthood of Montana.



ble for rape-related pregnancies.

But many victims of sexual violence do not want to disclose the assault, and they need medical care too. Medicaid coverage, which does not force victims to disclose assault, is a critical lifeline for low-income victims of sexual violence.

Yet even states that have already expanded Medicaid still leave many uninsured and privately insured survivors vulnerable to large medical bills.

In California, for example, many survivors of sexual violence with private health coverage end up with medical bills amounting to hundreds or thousands of dollars due to high insurance copayments or deductibles. In theory, victims can apply to the state's Victim Compensation Board for assistance, but the process is drawn out and bureaucratic. Systemic racism is also baked into the victim compensation system, since survivors with prior felony convictions, which are far more common among people of color, are automatically excluded from many states' victim compensation programs, including California's. A universal public insurance program would ensure that all victims are able to afford care after an assault.

Our society has long stigmatized victims of sexual violence and has never guaranteed them the medical care and support they deserve. In post-*Roe* America, the combination of anti-abortion politicians and our unjust healthcare system compound rape victims' suffering—adding financial insult to unimaginable injury.

Antony Blinken's visit to China didn't resolve tensions, but it's a start

For the first time in five years, a U.S. secretary of state set foot on Chinese soil for an official visit. Antony Blinken, America's top diplomat, spent the weekend in multiple meetings with senior Chinese officials in the hope that a little jaw-jaw will begin the process of defusing the mountain of grievances the U.S. and China have with one another.

Despite grumblings from China hawks on Capitol Hill that Blinken's visit to China was a wimpy display of appeasement to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the reality is that the trip was long overdue. Blinken was originally scheduled to visit China in February, almost three months after Presidents Joe Biden and Xi Jinping met on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Bali and pledged to improve a bilateral relationship that, at that point, was circling the drain.

But then came the discovery of the Chinese spy balloon hovering over the United States, which created a news media frenzy and heaped political pressure on Biden to retaliate. He did so not only by shooting the balloon down over the South Carolina coast but also by canceling Blinken's trip days before he was supposed to leave.

Bilateral ties between the world's two largest economic and military powers haven't been the same since. If anything, they've become more acrimonious. China continues to view the U.S. as an established superpower that is actively trying to undermine Chinese economic progress through its technology export controls and blacklisting of Chinese firms. The U.S. sees China as an increasingly aggressive nation seeking dominance in Asia and hoping to expand its influence in the Western Hemisphere.

The Taiwan issue remains the biggest sore spot for Washington and Beijing, with each side assuming the absolute worst of the other. China has made it abundantly clear that it won't tolerate what it refers to as Taiwanese separatism or independence, which if realized would likely spur Chinese military action to forcefully reincorporate the island with the mainland. In U.S. policymaking circles, the general assumption is no longer whether, but rather when, China will invade Taiwan.

It's when tensions are high when diplomacy can be most effective. So Blinken's foray into China was a common sense move, and anybody who opposed it has a responsibility to explain why their alternative course of action—namely, banking on a Cold War-style containment policy—would meet U.S. policy goals at an acceptable cost. The fact that the case has never been clearly articulated, outside of talking points that lazily equate diplomacy with weakness, is a big indictment on the argument itself.

Keeping the diplomatic option, of course, doesn't mean diplomacy is bound to succeed quickly. With respect to China, it most certainly won't. Indeed, Blinken came away from his trip without major deliverables. His 7 1/2-hour meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang; session with Wang Yi, the CCP's top foreign policy official; and his short interaction with Xi didn't produce the traditional agreements one might have dreamed about.

Blinken himself acknowledged that reestablishing military-to-military communications between Washington and Beijing, a top U.S. objective, is still a work in progress. “China has not agreed to move forward with that,” he told reporters at the tail end of his trip. “It's an issue we have to keep working on.”

But none of this should have been a surprise. The U.S. and China have deeply rooted systemic disputes on everything from Taiwan and the South China Sea to semiconductors and global supply chains. To think any of this could have been resolved in two days of meetings, however long and constructive, would be setting the bar far too high. We are unfortunately at a point in the U.S.-China relationship where easy solutions are no longer possible.

From the U.S. standpoint, the objective of the trip was more realistic: Stop the downward spiral and grease the wheels for more meetings between senior U.S. and Chinese officials. On that front at least, it appears that Blinken's trip was fruitful. The State Department announced that Qin will travel to Washington at some point in the future. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo will likely schedule trips of their own to China.

By **DANIEL DEPETRIS**

Chicago Tribune

Daniel DePetris is a fellow at Defense Priorities and a foreign affairs columnist for the Chicago Tribune.



The probability of Biden and Xi coming together in person for a second time in two years, during the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation conference in San Francisco this November, just went up as well. If such a meeting did occur, it would be pivotal, because managing U.S.-China relations responsibly will ultimately need to be driven from the very top. This is especially the case with respect to China, where Xi has consolidated his power over the CCP to an extent we haven't seen since Mao Zedong more than 70 years earlier.

Washington and Beijing also agreed to establish working groups on issues like stemming the flow of fentanyl precursors, resuming direct flights between the U.S. and China and finding a mutually acceptable arrangement that would increase the flow of journalists, students and ordinary citizens to one another's countries. While this sounds like small potatoes in the realm of great power politics, the world's two biggest states have to start somewhere—and it doesn't take a geopolitical genius to recognize that talking about territorial claims in the South China Sea would shut down the conversation before it even began.

This isn't the first time U.S. and Chinese officials have talked about stabilizing relations. Biden and Xi committed themselves to a similar task nearly a year ago, but events (such as Balloon Gate) overtook it. The U.S. and China appear to have recommitted to the same goal. Words, however, will need to be followed by actions. Otherwise, it's all talk.

Successful examination of the cargo vessel *Kota Raja* in Guam



CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER SARA MUIR

A U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia Sector Guam team conducts a port state control examination on the 472-foot Singapore-flagged commercial cargo vessel *Kota Raja* in the Port of Guam on June 15, 2023. Examiners found no significant deficiencies aboard

SANTA RITA, Guam—On June 15, 2023, a U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia Sector Guam team conducted a port state control examination on the 472-foot Singapore-flagged commercial cargo vessel *Kota Raja* in the Port of Guam.

Examiners found no significant deficiencies aboard. This achievement highlights the importance and impact of mariners taking the port security requirements seriously. The attention paid by examiners conducting multiple compliance inspections and exams on vessels in the area highlights the strategic value of Guam's port to the people of Guam and the wider region.

The port state control program, administered by the U.S. Coast Guard, is critical in ensuring foreign-flagged vessels calling on U.S. ports adhere to established safety and environmental regulations. By conducting comprehensive examinations like the one on the *Kota Raja*, the Coast Guard upholds its commitment to maintaining safe maritime operations and protecting both the port and the surrounding waters.

During the port state control exam, the crew supported a comprehensive range of tests and examinations at the examiners' discretion. These include reviewing documents, plans, manuals, and logs such

as licenses, endorsements, medical records, and certificates for safety, security, and environmental compliance.

Additionally, the crew conducts operational tests on navigation and bridge equipment, steering gear, fire pumps, bilge alarms, and oily water separators. The examination also covers inspections of cargo decks, accommodation spaces, galley, engineering spaces, and spot-checks of firefighting and lifesaving equipment. Further assessments include:

- Verifying International Ship and Port Facility Code compliance.
- Examining navigation charts and publications.
- Inspecting the marine sanitation device and incinerator.

The thoroughness of these examinations ensures that vessels like the *Kota Raja* meet the highest standards of safety,

Guam's port holds significant importance to the people of Guam and the region's strategic environment. It serves as a vital hub for commerce, facilitating the movement of goods and promoting economic growth.

Additionally, its strategic location in the Western Pacific enhances regional stability and bolsters the resilience of nations in the face of evolving challenges.

Emphasizing the importance of the port and the U.S. Coast Guard's role, Capt. Nick Simmons, commander of the U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam

and the Captain of the Port for the region, stated, "The recent successful port state control examination of the *Kota Raja* highlights our commitment to

» USCG ensures compliance and port security

upholding safety standards and ensuring compliance in Guam's port. As a critical component of the island's infrastructure, the port's security is vital to the economic prosperity and strategic stability of both Guam and the broader Western Pacific region. Our marine safety mission, including port state control exams, ensures the continued safety and resilience of the port and its surrounding waters." (USCG)

Articles of Termination Limited Liability Company (LLC)

The undersigned, the name of the Limited Liability Company, now hereby terminates its existence.

The company business has been wound up, and legal existence of the company has been terminated.

The existence of the limited liability company is terminated upon the filing of the articles of termination, or upon a later effective date if specified in the articles of termination.

No person may execute this report knowing it is false in any material respect.

The Articles of Termination was made by a vote of ALL of the members of the MASA SAIPAN LLC. in Commonwealth Northern Marianas Islands on May 31, 2023.

MASA SAIPAN LLC.

PMB 208, BOX 10000, SAIPAN, MP 96950
(670) 235-8885

SAIPAN'S LAND AND SEA: BATTLE SCARS & SITES OF RESILIENCE

AMP to host WWII-related community events in July

Saipan's Land and Sea: Battle Scars & Sites of Resilience, a National Endowment for the Humanities funded educational program, in collaboration with East Carolina University, will be hosting several public events at American Memorial Park. All events begin at 6pm and are free and open to the public.

The schedule is as follows:

■ July 6: Genevieve Cabrera will provide a lecture and discussion about Indigenous NMI history. There will also be a traditional Carolinian stick dance performance;

■ July 7: Dr. Galvin De-leon Guerrero will introduce *We Drank Our Tears* film and then lead a discussion about the film;

■ July 8: Jennifer McKinnon will lead a lecture and discussion about civilian and military experiences on the Battle for Saipan;

■ July 10: Don Farrell will provide a lecture about military perspectives in Battle for

Saipan: Military Perspectives, and the NMI involvement in the U.S. war on Japan;

■ July 12: Jennifer McKinnon will lead a lecture and discussion about civilian and military experiences on the Battle for Saipan;

■ July 13: Genevieve Cabrera will provide a lecture and discussion about Indigenous NMI history. There will also be a traditional Carolinian stick dance performance;

■ July 14: Dr. Galvin De-leon Guerrero will introduce *We Drank Our Tears* film and then lead a discussion about the film

■ July 17: Don Farrell will provide a lecture about military perspectives in Battle for Saipan: Military Perspectives, and the NMI involvement in the U.S. war on Japan

Find out more about the *Saipan's Land and Sea: Battle Scars & Sites of Resilience* program at <https://sites.ecu.edu/saipanland-marks2020/> (PR)

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Attorney for Petitioner: Barbara Reyes for
Creditor/Claimant Marianas Public Land Trust

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANAS ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF

ROGER WILLIAM SN. TALSACAN, Decedent.

CIVIL ACTION NO. 23-0090

NOTICE OF HEARING ON PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION, AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS

DATE: June 29, 2023
TIME: 10:00 am
JUDGE: Joseph N. Camacho

TO: THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ANY HEIRS, CLAIMANTS, OR CREDITORS OF THE LATE ROGER WILLIAM SN. TALSACAN OF HIS ESTATE:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Barbara Reyes of Saipan, CNMI ("Petitioner") has petitioned the Superior Court of Northern Marianas Islands to Admit the Estate of Roger William SN. Talsacan, the deceased to Probate, for Letters of Administration of the Estate and appointment of Pualani Fujihiro Talsacan as a proposed Administratrix of the Estate. The attorney for Petitioner is Robert T. Torres, Attorney at Law, whose address is 5960 Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya) P.O. Box 500730, Saipan, MP 96950.

The hearing on the Petition for Letters of Administration by Barbara Reyes, as Petitioner and to appoint Pualani Fujihiro Talsacan as the proposed Administratrix, is scheduled to be heard on the date at the time set forth above at the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, Guma' Hustisia, Civic Center, Saipan. All interested persons and entities should appear at the hearing.

Any and all persons, creditors, or entities having claims against the deceased, or his estate are hereby required by the law to file their claims with the Clerk of Court within sixty (60) days of this publication, or claim(s) will be barred. A copy of your claims should also be sent to ROBERT T. TORRES, Attorney at Law, at the address herein-above indicated.

Respectfully submitted this 22nd day of May 2023.

/s/ CLERK OF COURT/DEPUTY CLERK



COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



INVITATION FOR BIDS CUC-IFB-23-023

Supply and Delivery of Permanent Meter Test Bench And Portable Meter Test Bench

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the supply and delivery of one (1) permanent meter test bench and one (1) portable meter test bench for the island of Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, to assist water operation staff with CUC's Sustainable Water Infrastructure Management Strategy (SWIMS) program.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **June 15, 2023 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-IFB-23-023, Supply and Delivery of Permanent Meter Test Bench and Portable Meter Test Bench" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on June 28, 2023**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance code.

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 a.m. (ChST) on June 16, 2023** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address, manny.sablan@cucgov.org, with a copy to Nicolette Villagomez, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email address nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org and to Marcela Tenorio, P&S, Senior Administrative Technician - marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Business

I drove a Nissan Armada for a day

» My sort of first car rental review

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Thanks to HafaAdai Rent A Car, I was able to play Gulliver for a day driving their enormous 2022 Nissan Armada around Saipan.

At over 6 feet in height and 17 feet in length, the largest rental vehicle in HafaAdai Rent A Car's over 50-vehicle fleet is a marvel to look at and much, much more to drive.

I picked up the onyx black Armada at HafaAdai Rent A Car's airport branch one Saturday morning earlier this month and immediately put it through the paces.

Despite its size, the Armada was agile and easy to handle as I slammed the accelerator driving through Airport Road. Going left into Chalan Monsignor Guerrero was also a breeze, as despite the full-size SUV's high center of gravity, the Armada was surprisingly nimble on the turns.

Prior to this very difficult as-



MARK RABAGO
At over 6 feet in height and 17 feet in length, the 2022 Nissan Armada is the largest rental vehicle in HafaAdai Rent A Car's over 50-vehicle fleet.

signment reviewing a luxury vehicle, I invited the entire Saipan Tribune newsroom for a joyride aboard the Armada. I told my co-workers I'll provide the ride and "you guys, buy the snacks."

Almost everyone demurred (they probably know how much I eat) so I was left with the alternative and asked my most loyal of fans—my kids (wifey had

work)—to just partake of the fun and adventure in riding the seven-passenger Armada.

So, I then picked up my daughters at our Lower Navy Hill apartment and proceeded to Sabalu Market's temporary home at the Civic Center in Susupe for a quick breakfast.

Lo and behold, the 10-12-minute ride was smooth

as it could be as the Armada's active suspension and over 9 inches of ground clearance humbled the myriad of dastardly potholes that dot Beach Road.

My daughters were impressed by the Armada to say the least—with its cushy all-leather interior, high-tech infotainment system, and the rest of its bells and whistles—with the youngest even Instagramming her entire ride in it and even remarking "So, this is how it feels like to be a Roy in HBO's 'Succession!'"

Parking could be a challenge with the Armada because of its sheer size, but luckily I was able to find the right spot behind the basketball court near the beach.

If you're just 5'7" or shorter like me it's always a challenge to climb into large SUVs like the Armada. Good thing, it has stirrups and handles to pull yourself up and the same rings true going down.

A scenestealer could best describe the Armada as me and my daughters descended from it to do our rounds at the local weekend market, not a few probably asked "how could he have afforded this \$50,000 car?"

I was quick to point out though that the eye candy in four wheels was a rental courtesy of the Joeten Motor Company, Inc.'s subsidiary.

Next stop was Joeten Shopping Center Susupe where the kiddos shopped for a birthday present for their cousin (technically niece, but who's counting).

While waiting, I bumped into one of my oldest friends on the island, Nino, who moments before saw my post about reviewing the Armada in our group chat. He remarked that it's even bigger in person and encouraged me to trade-in my miniscule ride for this "bastion of machismo." I kiddingly said, "I'm not com-

to Banzai Cliff and Suicide Cliff in Marpi, but going to Sabalu Market, stopping at Joeten's main store, and driving around Garapan was already too much excitement for half a day (at least for little old me).

Heck, I even had plans of testing the Armada's 4x4 capabilities by driving it to Mt. Tapochao via Navy Hill Road, until I remembered that I was explicitly advised by HafaAdai Rent A Car's agent not to go offroading.

Dreams of driving the Armada north and to Saipan's highest peak were traded for my customary two-hour snooze on the weekend instead.

Still no regrets as riding the Armada even for half a day was mission accomplished. As for mundane tasks, we got to check its carrying capacity when we put some groceries at the back after picking up the wifey after her work.

To wrap things up, the 2022 Nissan Armada was a thrill to ride and its presence unmistakable. It's just the biggest vehicle I've ever driven in my first 50 years on Earth.

So, if you get a chance to rent this beast of a ride (and the money to fill her up after), roll the dice and enjoy.

To rent the 2022 Nissan Armada or for more information on HafaAdai Rent A Car's fleet or car rentals, call (670) their office inside the Joeten Motors Ford and Honda showroom at (670) 234-5567 or at their 24-hour car rental office at the Francisco C. Ada-Saipan International Airport at (670) 288-0087.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Drugmaker lobbying group sues over plan to negotiate Medicare drug prices

A key drugmaker lobbying group has joined the legal fight against the federal government's plan to negotiate Medicare drug prices. The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, or PhRMA, is suing over plans laid out in the Inflation Reduction Act to give the federal coverage program more control over its pharmaceutical costs. PhRMA said in a federal court complaint filed Wednesday that the act forces drugmakers to agree to a "government-dictated price" under the threat of a heavy tax. The complaint said Congress delegated too much authority to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to set prices. It also says the program violates the due process clause of the Constitution's Fifth Amendment "by exempting key decisions from public input and insulating them from administrative or judicial review." The lawsuit names HHS and its secretary, Xavier Becerra, as defendants. It also names Chiquita Brooks-LaSure, administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. An HHS spokeswoman said the department

plans to "vigorously defend" the law. The National Infusion Center Association and the Global Colon Cancer Association joined PhRMA in the complaint. Earlier this month, the drugmakers Merck and Bristol-Myers Squibb also sued over the plan. Medicare is the federally funded coverage program mainly for people who are age 65 and older. The Inflation Reduction Act's plan marks the first time that the federal government will bargain directly with drug companies over the price for some of Medicare's costliest drugs. (AP)

Microsoft, US regulators head to court over \$69 B deal that could reshape video gaming

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Microsoft on Thursday will try to gain clearance to complete a \$69 billion takeover of video game maker Activision Blizzard in a legal showdown with U.S. regulators that will reshape a pastime that's bigger than the movie and music industries combined. The battle will pit Microsoft's ambition to expand its Xbox console imprint beyond its Xbox console against the U.S. Federal Trade Commission's bid to block a deal that it contends will stifle competition and innovation to

the detriment of consumers. It's the latest twist in a deal that was announced 17 months ago. Both Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella and Activision Blizzard CEO Bobby Kotick are expected to testify at some point during five days of hearings in San Francisco before U.S. District Judge Jacqueline Scott Corley that will conclude June 29. FTC lawyers will call upon experts and a top executive for Sony, the maker of the industry-leading PlayStation video game console, to show why Microsoft will gain an unfair advantage if it is allowed to blend its Xbox franchise with an Activision acquisition that will give it ownership of popular video game titles such as Call of Duty, World of Warcraft and Candy Crush. After all the evidence and arguments are presented, Corley will decide whether or not to grant the FTC's request for a court order that would keep the deal in a holding pattern until a more exhaustive administrative trial that's scheduled to begin in Washington D.C. on August 2. The judge isn't expected to rule until after the Fourth of July holiday. If Corley declines to issue an injunction, Microsoft could move to close the deal ahead of a July 18 deadline and avert a \$3 billion breakup fee.



MARK RABAGO
The happy and friendly staff of HafaAdai Rent A Car's Francisco C. Ada-Saipan International Airport location.



MARK RABAGO
The author takes a selfie beside the spaciously elegant and luxurious 2022 Nissan Armada.

Nation

Immigration drove white, Asian population growth in US last year

By MIKE SCHNEIDER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Without immigration, the white population in the U.S. would have declined last year.

Immigration also propelled the expansion of the Asian population, which was the fastest-growing race or ethnic group last year in the U.S., while births outpacing deaths helped propel growth in Hispanic, Black, tribal and Hawaiian populations.

Population estimates released Thursday by the U.S. Census Bureau show what drove changes in different race, ethnic and age groups last year, as well as since the start of COVID-19's spread in the U.S. in April 2020. The country had grown to 333.2 million people by the middle of last year, a 0.4% increase over the previous year, according to the 2022 population estimates.

For white residents in the U.S., immigration drove the expansion. Without it, the white population, including those who identify as more than one race, would have dropped last year by more than 85,000 people instead of growing meagerly by



People recite an oath during a naturalization ceremony Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2023, in San Diego.

more than 388,000 residents, or 0.1%.

When the focus is narrowed to white people who aren't Hispanic and identify only with a single race, there was a decline of more than 668,000

people in the white population since the number of immigrants couldn't overcome the steep drop in natural decrease that came from deaths outnumbering births last year.

Population growth is pro-

pelled in two ways: through immigration and natural increase, when births outpace deaths. The data released Thursday speak to the complexity of the nation's ever-shifting population patterns and reinforce a level of nuance not always reflected amid the political debate over immigration.

"Immigrant and refugee communities bring talent, culture and a set of skills that are needed in our community," said Arrey Obenson, president and CEO of the International Institute of St. Louis, which helps newcomers adapt to life in the U.S.

Since the start of the pandemic in April 2020, the white population has grown by 391,000 people, all of it driven

by immigration.

Hamdullah Hamdard immigrated to St. Louis in September 2021 from Afghanistan, where he had run a media production company, after threats from the Taliban and deteriorating conditions made it unsafe for his wife, son, brothers and parents. He started a production company in St. Louis, runs a news outlet for the local Afghan community and is a communications manager for the International Institute of St. Louis.

"I could start my own business once again, and I could pursue the dreams that I had in Afghanistan," Hamdard, 31, said Wednesday.

The United States last year had 260.5 million people

who identified as white, including those who identify as more than one race. Maricopa County, home to Phoenix, had the biggest jump in the white population of any county, gaining more than 35,000 new white residents last year. Arizona's largest county also had the biggest gain in the overall population of any U.S. county, with a jump in 2022 of almost 57,000 new residents due to domestic migration.

Immigration also drove Asian growth last year, accounting for two-thirds of the 577,000-person increase in people who identify as Asian, including those who identify with more than one race. That 2.4% bump was the largest of any race or ethnic group, and there were 24.6 million Asians in the U.S. last year.

King County, Washington—home to Seattle—added almost 21,500 Asian residents, the most of any U.S. county last year.

The Hispanic population in the U.S. grew by more than 1 million people last year, the biggest jump in pure numbers of any race or ethnic group. Two-thirds of that expansion was driven by natural increase, or births outpacing deaths. More than 63.3 million people identified as Hispanic last year, a 1.7% increase over the previous year.

The biggest Hispanic growth in pure numbers was in Harris County, Texas, home to Houston, which added almost 35,000 Latinos last year.

Natural increase also drove almost two-thirds of the 436,000-person jump in the Black population last year, a 0.9% increase from the previous year.

House censures Rep. Schiff over Trump-Russia probes

WASHINGTON (AP)—The House voted Wednesday to censure California Rep. Adam Schiff for comments he made several years ago about investigations into Donald Trump's ties to Russia, rebuking the Democrat and frequent critic of the former president along party lines.

Schiff becomes the 25th House lawmaker to be censured. He was defiant ahead of the vote, saying he will wear the formal disapproval as a "badge of honor" and charging his GOP colleagues of doing the former president's bidding. "I will not yield," Schiff, who is running for the Senate in his home state, said during debate over the measure. "Not one inch."

When it was time for Schiff to come to the front of the chamber to be formally censured, immediately after the vote, the normally solemn ceremony turned into more of a celebratory atmosphere. Dozens of Democrats crowded to the front, clapping and cheering for Schiff and patting him on the back. They chanted "No!", "Shame!" and "Adam! Adam!"

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., read the resolution out loud, as is tradition after a censure.

But he only read part of the document before leaving the chamber as Democrats heckled and interrupted him.

"Censure all of us," one Democrat yelled.

Schiff, the former Democratic chairman of the House Intelligence Committee and the lead prosecutor in Trump's first impeachment trial, has long been a top Republican political target. Soon after taking back the majority this year, Republicans blocked him from sitting on the intelligence panel.

More than 20 Republicans voted with Democrats last week to block the censure resolution, but they changed their votes this week after the measure's sponsor, Republican Rep. Anna Paulina Luna of Florida, removed a provision that could have fined Schiff \$16 million if the House Ethics Committee determined he lied. Several of the Republicans who voted to block the resolution last week said they opposed fining a member of Congress in that manner.

The final vote on Wednesday was 213-209 along party lines, with a handful of members voting present.

The revised resolution says Schiff held positions of power during Trump's presiden-

cy and "abused this trust by saying there was evidence of collusion between Trump's campaign and Russia." Schiff was one of the most outspoken critics of the former president as both the Justice Department and the Republican-led House launched investigations into Trump's ties to Russia in 2017. Both investigations concluded that Russia intervened in the 2016 presidential election but neither found evidence of a criminal conspiracy.

"Representative Schiff purposely deceived his Committee, Congress, and the American people," the resolution said.

The House has only censured two other lawmakers in the last 20 years. Republican Rep. Paul Gosar of Arizona was censured in 2021 for tweeting an animated video that depicted him striking Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., with a sword. Former Democratic Rep. Charlie Rangel of New York was censured in 2010 for serious financial and campaign misconduct.

The censure itself carries no practical effect, except to provide a historic footnote that marks a lawmaker's career. But the GOP resolution would also launch an ethics investigation into Schiff's conduct.

Hunter Biden plea deal in tax, gun case set for July court date

WASHINGTON (AP)—Hunter Biden will go before a judge next month to formally strike a plea agreement with prosecutors on tax and gun charges that will likely spare President Joe Biden's son time behind bars, according to court documents posted Wednesday.

U.S. District Judge Maryellen Noreika must still approve the plea agreement that was reached following a lengthy federal investigation. It calls for the president's son to plead guilty to two misdemeanor counts of failing to pay taxes. Hunter Biden also must commit to court-imposed conditions that will spare him full prosecution on a felony gun charge.

The hearing is scheduled for July 26 as a combined

initial appearance and plea agreement.

News of the plea deal Tuesday sparked criticism from Republicans who are pursuing their own congressional investigations into nearly every facet of Hunter Biden's business dealings, including foreign payments.

Attorney General Merrick Garland, traveling in Stockholm on Wednesday, said David Weiss, the U.S. attorney for Delaware, was given "full authority to decide the matter as he decided was appropriate. And that's what he's done."

Former President Donald Trump and other Republicans have pointed to the case to raise questions about Justice Department independence as Trump faces a

historic criminal indictment. The charges against Trump were filed by a special prosecutor appointed in an effort to avoid any perception of a political conflict.

The Hunter Biden charges, meanwhile, were filed by U.S. Attorney Weiss, who was appointed by Trump and kept on during the Biden administration to continue the investigation, some aspects of continue. Noreika was also appointed by Trump, in 2017.

Hunter Biden's lawyer has said the guilty pleas are an effort to take responsibility for mistakes that he made "during a period of turmoil and addiction in his life," and his understanding is that it wraps up the five-year investigation of his client.

Asia

Biden calls China's leader 'dictator'

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden's remarks calling Chinese leader Xi Jinping a "dictator" and China a country with "real economic difficulties" drew fast condemnation from China on Wednesday, cracking open a new rift just after the two countries agreed to tentative steps to stabilize the relationship.

In Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning condemned Biden's unusually pointed comments as "extremely absurd and irresponsible."

The clash of words comes after Secretary of State Antony Blinken concluded a visit to Beijing on Monday that sought to break the ice in a relationship that has hit a historical low. While both sides saw those talks as productive, they did not result in any significant breakthroughs beyond an agreement to return to a broad agenda for cooperation and competition.

China's quick response to Biden, a president known for seemingly off-script remarks that venture beyond his administration's policies, raises questions whether his remarks would undo the limited progress that had been made in Blinken's carefully engineered trip or whether the two sides would move on.

Biden's characterization of China comes as the campaign for next year's presidential election is already taking off, with Republicans accusing him of being weak on China.

Biden also was preparing to welcome Indian Prime Minis-

ter Narendra Modi to Washington on Wednesday evening for a lavish state visit where a central theme will be a shared wariness of China.

Biden, at a fundraiser in California on Tuesday night, referred back to January and February's two-week overflight of what the U.S. says was a Chinese spy balloon. The balloon's surprise appearance over U.S. skies roiled relations and transfixed the American public.

Speaking to wealthy donors at the event for his 2024 reelection campaign, Biden depicted Xi as out-of-touch and embarrassed by the incident, which ended with the Air Force shooting down the balloon just off the East Coast.

"The reason why Xi Jinping got very upset in terms of when I shot that balloon down with two box cars full of spy equipment is he didn't know it was there," Biden told the crowd.

"No, I'm serious," he added. "That was the great embarrassment for dictators, when they didn't know what happened."

Biden also played down trade competition from China, which is the world's second-biggest economy after the United States but struggling to emerge from COVID-era financial troubles.

"By the way, I promise you, don't worry about China. Worry about China but don't worry about China," Biden said. "I really mean it. China has real economic difficulties."

Biden's remarks came hours after his secretary of

state, in an interview with MSNBC, had called for the two countries to put the balloon incident behind them, saying it was a chapter that "should be closed."

In Beijing on Wednesday, Mao told reporters that Biden's remarks "go totally against facts and seriously violate diplomatic protocol, and severely infringe on China's political dignity."

"It is a blatant political provocation," Mao said.

Mao also reiterated China's version of the balloon episode, saying the balloon was for meteorological research and had been accidentally blown off course.

Administration officials signaled Wednesday that Biden had no intention of walking back his comments.

Biden and Blinken have made clear "we will continue to responsibly manage this relationship, maintain open lines of communication with the PRC," Vedant Patel, a State Department spokesman, told reporters, using an abbreviation for the People's Republic of China.

"But that, of course, does not mean we will not be blunt and forthright about our differences," including differences on the global competition between democracies and autocracies, Patel said.

U.S.-China tensions have mounted for years as rivalry builds over trade and global influence. Repeated flare-ups have helped escalate the tensions, including over the balloon, U.S. tariffs, sanctions on China, and self-ruled Taiwan.

ing diplomatic and security measures were among his top policy priorities in the first half of this year. The goal he said, is "to raise Japan's presence in the international society, to defend the peace of our country and the people's lives."

Cooking gas explosion kills 31 people at barbecue restaurant in northwestern China

BEIJING (AP)—A massive cooking gas explosion at a barbecue restaurant in northwestern China killed 31 people and injured seven, Chinese authorities said Thursday. The blast tore through the establishment at around 8:40 p.m. Wednesday on a busy street in Yinchuan, the capital of the traditionally Muslim Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, as

people were gathering on the eve of the Dragon Boat Festival holiday, the official Xinhua News Agency said. The festival is a national holiday devoted to eating rice dumplings and racing boats manned by teams of paddlers. Chinese President Xi Jinping demanded all-out treatment of the injured and a safety overhaul after the explosion, Xinhua reported. Online news site The Paper cited a woman identified only by her surname Chen saying she had been about 50 meters (164 feet) from the restaurant when she heard the explosion. She described seeing two waiters emerge from the restaurant afterward, one of whom collapsed immediately, while thick smoke billowed from the restaurant and a strong smell of cooking gas permeated the area.

World

Search area for lost Titanic-bound submersible deepens

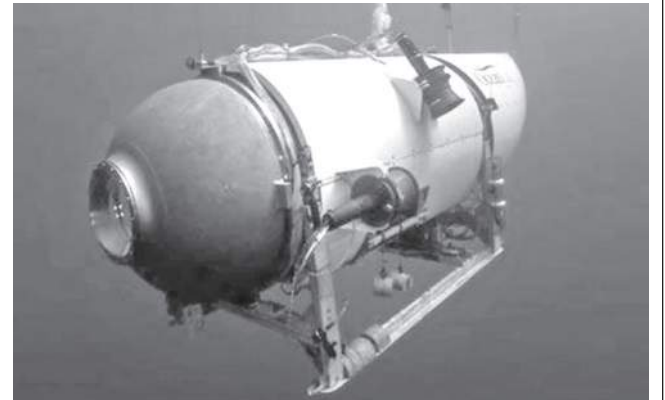
By PATRICK WHITTLE and HOLLY RAMER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rescuers on Wednesday rushed more ships and vessels to the area where a submersible disappeared on its way to the Titanic wreckage site, hoping underwater sounds they detected for a second straight day might help narrow their search in an increasingly urgent mission.

Crews were scouring an area twice the size of Connecticut in waters 2 1/2 miles deep, said Captain Jamie Frederick of the First Coast Guard District, who noted that authorities are still holding out hope of saving the five passengers onboard the Titan.

"This is a search and rescue mission, 100%," he said. "... We'll continue to put every available asset that we have in an effort to find the Titan and the crew members."

But even those who expressed optimism warned that many obstacles remain: from pinpointing the vessel's location, to reaching it with rescue equipment, to bringing it to the surface — assuming it's still intact. And



This undated image provided by OceanGate Expeditions in June 2021 shows the company's Titan submersible.

all that has to happen before the passengers' oxygen supply runs out, which some have estimated might happen as early as Thursday morning.

Meanwhile, newly uncovered allegations suggest there had been significant warnings made about vessel safety during the submersible's development.

The area of the North Atlantic where the Titan went missing on Sunday is prone to fog and stormy conditions, making it an extremely challenging environment to conduct a search-and-rescue mission, said Donald Murphy, an oceanographer who served as chief scientist of the

Coast Guard's International Ice Patrol. The lost submersible could be as deep as about 12,500 feet (3,800 meters) below the surface near the watery tomb of the Titanic.

Key to the search are camera-equipped remote-operated robots, which are designed to scan the seafloor in real-time at depths other vessels can't reach. Two were operating in the area Wednesday and more were on the way, officials said.

Frederick said while the sounds that have been detected offered a chance to narrow the search, their exact location and source hasn't yet been determined.

Gang slaughtered 46 women at Honduran prison

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (AP)—Gang members in a women's prison in Honduras slaughtered 46 other women inmates by spraying them with gunfire, hacking them with machetes and then locking survivors in their cells and dousing them with flammable liquid, an official said Wednesday.

The carnage in Tuesday's riot was the worst atrocity at a women's prison in recent memory, something President Xiomara Castro called "monstrous."

Relatives said inmates at the facility had been threatened for weeks by members of the notorious Barrio 18 gang.

Chillingly, the gang members were able to arm themselves with prohibited weapons, brush past guards and attack; they even carried locks to shut their victims inside, apparently to burn them to death. The intensity of the fire left the walls of the cells blackened and beds reduced to twisted heaps of metal.

"A group of armed people went to the cellblock of a rival gang, locked the doors,

opened fire on them," said Juan López Rochez, the chief of operations for the country's National Police.

Miguel Martínez, a security ministry spokesman, said the attack was taped by security cameras, up to the moment the gang members destroyed them in what he called a "planned" attack.

"You can see the moment in which the women overcome the guards, leaving them helpless, and take their keys," Martínez said.

Castro said Tuesday's riot at the prison in the town of Tamara, about 30 miles (50 kilometers) northwest of Honduras' capital, was "planned by maras (street gangs) with the knowledge and acquiescence of security authorities."

Castro fired Security Minister Ramón Sabillón, and replaced him with Gustavo Sánchez, who had been serving as head of the National Police.

But Castro but did not explain how inmates identified as members of the Barrio 18 gang were able to get guns

and machetes into the prison, or move freely into an adjoining cell block. Initial reports suggested the doors to the gang's cell block had been left open, facilitating the attack.

The amount of weaponry found in the prison after the riot was impressive: 18 pistols, an assault rifle, two machine pistols and two grenades—all of which were smuggled into the prison.

"Obviously, there must have been human failures," López Rochez said. "We are investigating all the employees at the center."

Sandra Rodríguez Vargas, the assistant commissioner for Honduras' prison system, said the attackers "removed" guards at the facility—none appeared to have been injured—around 8 a.m. Tuesday.

Twenty-six of the victims were burned to death and the remainder shot or stabbed, said Yuri Mora, the spokesman for Honduras' national police investigation agency. At least seven inmates were being treated at a Tegucigalpa hospital.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Kishida says he will attend NATO leaders' summit

TOKYO (AP)—Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Wednesday announced plans to visit Lithuania next month to attend a NATO leaders' summit as his country steps up cooperation with the Western organization amid China's increasingly assertive military activity. Kishida stressed the importance of dialogue with China in order to develop "constructive and stable" relationship with Beijing while his country cooperates with its key ally, the United States. He said the state of U.S.-China relations are crucial to international peace and stability. At a news conference marking the end of a five-month long parliamentary session, Kishida said reinforce-

Off The Wall

Florida deputy, motorist survive being swept through storm drain

PENSACOLA, Fla. (AP)—A Florida sheriff's deputy and a motorist are lucky to be alive after they were sucked into a flooded storm drain during a torrential downpour, then dragged underwater for around 30 seconds before emerging—soaked but unharmed—on the other side of a highway.

Deputy William Hollingsworth was helping stranded drivers amid the rapidly rising water early Friday when he saw the motorist disappear beneath the surface. Hollingsworth

"rushed to his aid without regard to his own safety," Escambia County Sheriff Chip Simmons told reporters.

The pair traveled nearly 100 feet (30 meters) under four lanes of Highway 98, Simmons said. The episode was recorded by the deputy's body camera—although the underwater portion of the video is completely dark, filled only with the muffled sounds of rushing water.

After emerging on the other side, Hollingsworth calls out to the driver while wading toward

him, shouting "Buddy I got you! Oh Jesus!" Red and blue lights from his police cruiser reflect off the pitch-black water. The motorist, who wasn't identified by name, yells, "I almost died."

The two hold onto each other as they head back across the road, still in disbelief.

"I've never held my breath like that in my life," the deputy says. "Me neither," the motorist agrees.

Other law enforcement officers arrive and the pair recounts their experience.

Auto shop owner who paid a worker 91,500 in oily pennies ordered to pay nearly \$40K more

ATLANTA (AP)—The owner of an auto repair shop who paid a former employee with 91,500 oily pennies has been ordered by a judge to pay nearly 4 million more cents.

A federal judge ruled that Miles Walker, who owns A OK Walker Autoworks in Peachtree City, Georgia, owes \$39,934 to nine workers for unpaid overtime and damages.

Attorneys for Walker agreed to the payments to settle a civil lawsuit brought by the U.S. Labor Department that accused Walker of retaliating against former employee

Andreas Flaten in 2021.

After Flaten filed a complaint with the agency saying Walker owed him a final \$915 paycheck, the employer dumped that amount in oil-covered pennies in Flaten's driveway. The mountain of loose change came with a pay stub signed with an expletive.

The Labor Department said further investigation found that Walker's business had also violated overtime provisions of the federal Fair Standards and Labor Act.

The judge on June 16 signed a consent order in which Walker agreed to pay nearly

\$8,700 more to Flaten in owed overtime and damages. Eight other workers are to receive amounts between \$14,640 and \$513 within the next year.

"The court has sent a clear message to employers such as Miles Walker who subject employees to unfair wage practices and outright intimidation and retaliation," Tremelle Howard, the Labor Department's regional solicitor in Atlanta, said in a statement.

Walker's attorney, Ryan Farmer, said the conflict with Flaten doesn't reflect his client's "true character as a businessman."

Velociraptor statue heist ends with 3 arrests

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP)—Police have hunted down a velociraptor that was stolen from outside a South Dakota arts and science center.

Sioux Falls police Sgt. Aaron Benson said Friday that a security officer spotted three people carrying the statue away from the Washington Pavilion and called police just after midnight. Surveillance video then helped officers track the statue to a nearby apartment,

The Argus Leader reports.

"When opening the door, detectives could clearly see the velociraptor was sitting right inside," Benson said.

Police detained the three suspects on charges of grand theft. Benson said one was 18, another 19 and the third a juvenile.

"Fortunately, the statue was not damaged," stated Madelyn Grogan, the Pavilion's director of education, programming and exhibits, in an email Friday.

The statue and many other dinosaur representations are part of the "Dinosaurs in the Wild" exhibition at the Washington Pavilion's science center. The organization did not provide any information on the size or weight of the statue. Scientists believe velociraptors grew to about 6 feet (1.8 meters) long and weighed about 100 pounds (45 kilograms) when they roamed the earth millions of years ago.

Illinois man charged after telling police he shot himself during a dream about home intruder

LAKE BARRINGTON, Ill. (AP)—A suburban Chicago man is facing firearm charges after he told officers he accidentally shot himself in the leg while dreaming that an intruder was breaking into his home, police said.

The Lake Barrington man was charged about two months after Lake County Sheriff's deputies were called to his home on April 10 on a report about a person with a gunshot wound, police said.

Deputies who found the 62-year-old man with a gunshot wound to one of his legs applied a tourniquet to the limb because he "was losing a significant amount of blood" before being hospitalized, police said.

The man told investigators he "had a dream that someone was breaking into his home" and during that dream, he "retrieved his .357 Magnum revolver and shot at who he believed was the intruder," police said.

"When he fired, he shot himself and apparently woke up

from the dream," police said Tuesday in a news release.

Investigators determined there was no burglary attempt at the man's home in the northwest Chicago suburb. But they found that his state firearm owner's identification card had been revoked, and he was still in possession of a firearm.

A warrant was issued June 9 for the man on charges of possession of a firearm without a valid FOID card and reckless discharge of a firearm, both felonies, police said.

Science & Technology

Meat grown from animal cells? Here's what it is, how it's made

By **LAURA UNGAR** and **JONEL ALECCIA**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

The U.S. government is allowing the sale of chicken made from animal cells.

California companies Upside Foods and Good Meat were granted permission on Wednesday to sell their products by the Agriculture Department.

Livestock doesn't need to be raised and killed to produce this new type of meat, which proponents say is better for the animals and for the environment because land does not need to be cleared for grazing or growing feed.

Currently, the U.S. uses over 1 billion acres of land for agriculture, or just over half of total land -- the majority of which is used for grazing cattle.

What is it?

It's meat grown from the cells of animals in steel tanks. Though it's known in the industry as cultivated meat, it's sometimes called cultured

meat, lab-grown meat or cell-based meat. There are more than 150 companies around the world trying to develop these food products. They're working on a variety of meats: chicken, beef, pork and lamb.

Where can you get it?

At this point, you can't buy these new meats at the grocery store — they will be initially rolled out at restaurants. Consumers can expect cultivated meat to be sold at a growing number of restaurants and small retailers within the next two to five years and on supermarket shelves within seven to 10 years, said Sebastian Bohn, a project manager specializing in cell-based food for CRB, a Missouri firm that designs and builds facilities for pharmaceutical, biotech and food companies.

How is it made?

It starts with cells, which can come from a fertilized egg, a special bank of stored cells or tissue initially taken from a living animal. The cells are mixed with a broth of

nutrients that the cells need to grow and divide. Cells are triggered to turn into skeletal muscle, fat and connective tissues. After days or weeks, the cells are removed from the tanks and shaped into products such as nuggets.

The easiest products to make this way are those usually made with ground meat, such as hamburgers and chicken nuggets. Some companies are working on products with more structure, such as chicken breasts and steaks. Those need a scaffold, or structure for the cells to grow on, which can be vegetable-based or made of animal products like collagen.

Is it really meat?

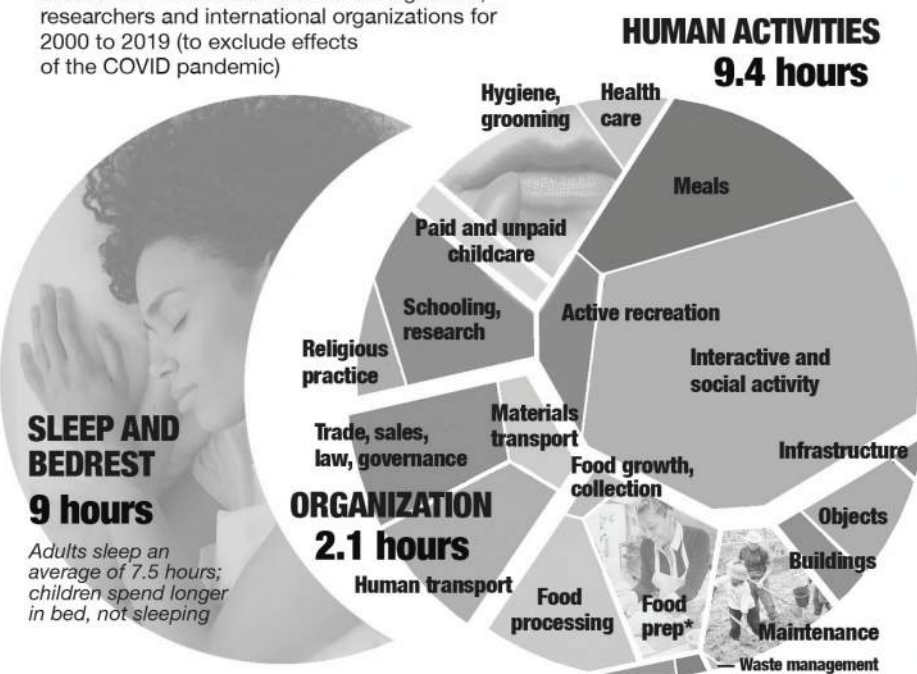
Experts say it's real meat created in a different way. It's not the same as plant-based products such as Impossible burgers, which do not contain animal cells. Some versions of cultivated meat — including Good Meat chicken products — do contain a small amount of vegetable proteins. Upside Foods officials say their meat does not.

Science Matters

How humanity spends its day

A new survey of people in 140 countries found how humanity spends its 15 waking hours a day. Worldwide, economic activity — or work — takes up only 2.6 hours a day.

Data came from national statistics agencies, researchers and international organizations for 2000 to 2019 (to exclude effects of the COVID pandemic)



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Source: Eric Galbraith of McGill University; Proceedings of the US National Academy of Sciences; Human Chronome Project; TNS Photos
Graphic: Helen Lee McComas, Tribune News Service

Life & Style

Geraldo Rivera says he's quitting Fox News' show

NEW YORK (AP)—Geraldo Rivera has quit as one of the lonely liberal voices on Fox News' popular political combat show "The Five," saying Wednesday that "a growing tension that goes beyond editorial differences" made it no longer worth it to him.

The last scheduled appearance on "The Five" for the television veteran,

whose 80th birthday is on July 4, is next week.

"It has been a rocky ride but it has also been an exhilarating adventure that spanned quite a few years," he said in an interview with The Associated Press on Wednesday. "I hope it's not my last adventure."

Rivera said that it was his choice to leave "The Five," but that Fox management

"didn't race after me to say, 'Geraldo, please come back.'" There was no immediate comment from Fox.

Despite airing in the late afternoon instead of prime time, "The Five" has become Fox's most-watched program, with an average of more than 3 million viewers last year. Its conceit is simple—five people, four of them conservative and

one liberal—kick around the issues of the day.

Greg Gutfeld, Jesse Watters, Dana Perino and Jeanine Pirro are the regular conservatives. Rivera has rotated as the liberal voice with Jessica Tarlov and Harold Ford Jr., a former congressman from Tennessee.

Rivera said he planned to remain as a "correspondent at large" at Fox, with a contract that expires in January 2025.

He said he'd been suspended a handful of times, most recently in early May. He had tweeted shortly after Fox fired Tucker Carlson on April 24 that he found Carlson's theo-

ries about the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection to be "bullshit," leading Gutfeld to respond via tweet, "You're a class act Geraldo, a real man of the people." Carlson had downplayed the violence on Jan. 6, calling people who invaded the Capitol "sightseers."

Rivera and Gutfeld had a handful of particularly contentious exchanges. In late April, Rivera told him "stop pointing at me" when they argued over electric vehicles. He called Gutfeld "an arrogant punk" on the air last year during a fight about abortion.

Rivera would not comment

directly about Gutfeld.

"There has been a growing tension that goes beyond editorial differences and personal annoyances and gripes," he said. "It's not worth it to me."

Rivera, once a friend of Donald Trump who split with him over the former president's false claims of winning the 2020 election, said that "under no circumstances do I think Donald Trump should be president of the United States again and that's an important message I am committed to bringing to the American people between now and November 2024."

Hollywood writers at rally say they'll win

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Fifty days into a strike with no end in sight, about 1,000 Hollywood writers and their supporters marched and rallied in Los Angeles for a new contract with studios that includes payment guarantees and job security.

Speakers at the Writers Guild of America's WGA Strong March and Rally for a

Fair Contract on Wednesday emphasized the broad support for their cause shown by other Hollywood unions—including actors in their own contract negotiations—and labor at large.

"We're all in it together, we're all fighting the same fight, for a sustainable job in the face of corporate greed," Adam Conover, a writer and

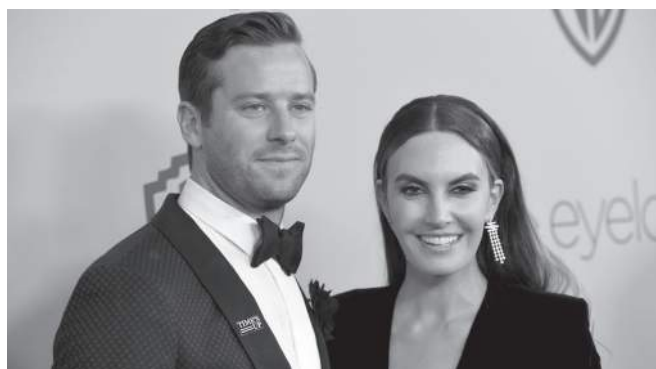
a member of the guild's board and its negotiating committee, told a crowd at the end of the march at the La Brea Tar Pits. "We are going to win because they need us. Writers are the ones who stare at a blank page. We are the ones who invent the characters, tell the stories and write the jokes that their audiences love. They'd have nothing without us."

Armie Hammer, wife reach divorce settlement

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Armie Hammer has reached a divorce agreement with his wife, Elizabeth Chambers, nearly three years after she filed to end their marriage.

Hammer's attorney filed documents in Los Angeles Superior Court on Tuesday informing a judge that the actor and Chambers have come to terms over child custody, child support, spousal support and division of assets. A judge will need to sign off on the proposed agreement and declare the two divorced.

The settlement comes weeks after LA County prosecutors declined to charge Hammer in an investigation stemming from a woman's allegation that he sexually assaulted her in 2017. They cited a lack of evidence to prove their case be-



Armie Hammer, left, and wife Elizabeth Chambers arrive at the InStyle and Warner Bros. Golden Globes afterparty, Jan. 7, 2018, in Beverly Hills, Calif.

yond a reasonable doubt.

Hammer said on Instagram that after a long public silence that "I look forward to beginning what will be a long, difficult process of putting my life back together now that my name has been cleared."

Allegations of sexual violence from women early in 2021 derailed Hammer's career, and he has not worked in Hollywood since.

Hammer and Chambers separated, and she filed for divorce, in 2020.

'Tiger King' star 'Doc' Antle convicted of wildlife trafficking

WINCHESTER, Va. (AP)—A wild animal trainer featured in the popular Netflix series "Tiger King" has been convicted of wildlife trafficking in Virginia, the attorney general's office announced Tuesday.

Bhagavan "Doc" Antle was accused of illegally buying endangered lion cubs in Frederick County, Virginia, for display and profit at his South Carolina zoo, Attorney General Jason Miyares said in a news release. A jury convicted Antle on Friday of two felony counts each of wildlife trafficking and conspiring to wildlife traffic.

Antle, who owns the Myrtle Beach Safari, appeared in "Tiger King: Murder, Mayhem and Madness," a Netflix documentary miniseries that focused on tiger breeders.

The jury acquitted Antle of five counts of animal cruelty and Judge Alexander Iden dismissed four additional animal cruelty charges against



Doc Antle

Antle and all charges against his two adult daughters, The Winchester Star reported.

Prosecutor Michelle Welch said Myrtle Beach Safari's lucrative petting zoo motivated Antle to maintain a steady supply of immature lion cubs that he purchased from Wilson's Wild Animal Park near Winchester, calling the arrangement a "cub pipeline" from Virginia to South Carolina.

When Antle and Keith Wilson, the park's former owner, began doing business in 2015, it was still legal to buy and sell lions, Welch said. But after lions were designated as an endangered species in December 2015, lions could only be traded between zoos and wildlife preserves that were part of an established breeding program and had

permits. There were three illegal cub exchanges in 2017, 2018 and 2019, Welch said.

Antle was indicted in 2020 on several offenses including felony counts of wildlife trafficking and conspiracy. In August 2019, 119 animals—including lions, tigers, bears, camels, goats and water buffalo—were seized from Wilson's roadside zoo after a judge found that Wilson "cruelly treated, neglected, or deprived" the animals of adequate care.

Wilson testified that Antle paid him in advance under the guise of a donation. He said Antle paid \$2,500 to \$3,000 per cub with the exception of the 2017 transaction when Antle traded three lynx kittens for three lion cubs.

Wilson is charged with nine misdemeanor counts of animal cruelty and 10 felony counts of selling an endangered species and a hearing in his case is scheduled for Friday.

Relations with in-laws hit new lows after man's death

DEAR ABBY: I was never close to my late husband's family. He had two half-siblings from his mother and seven from his father. (He was the only mutual child between them.) At his funeral, his sister on his mother's side wore what appeared to be a white wedding dress and had her three daughters dressed like flower girls. She had threatened me often with violence and stalked me at my job. I got a protective order, but it took three filings to get it because her father has friends in the court system. The order is for one year, but we'll see what happens when it expires.

Everyone in his family has demanded a portion of his ashes. I refuse to divide them because he wanted to be buried with me, and I want to abide by his wishes. The other side of his family contacts me only if it benefits them.

For almost a year, I took care of my father-in-law, who has dementia, without any of the seven remaining children helping. I have since cut ties with all of them. They are toxic, and I know why my husband kept me away from them.

Should I feel guilty for not sharing his remains, or feel good for carrying out his last wishes? The family says we should be working "together," but I never even met some of them until he had passed away. They think we should be family since he was their brother. I disagree.

MOVING FORWARD IN INDIANA

DEAR MOVING FORWARD: Please accept my sympathy for the loss of your husband. The time for you all to have "been family" was long before his death. His sister appears to have mental problems, so resenting her for her and her daughters' attire at the funeral is a waste of your energy.

As the widow, your husband's remains belong solely to you, and you are legally entitled to carry out his wishes. However, if his relatives are as toxic as you describe, you may need the help of an attorney to enforce them.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I have been in a relationship for six years. He's a wonderful father figure for my daughter. He makes us a real family, but the two of us never have time alone. He also doesn't show me any affection. I know he loves me, but am I wrong for wanting time for just us?

My daughters are 20 and 17, but our 17-year-old is autistic, so she lives in a world of her own like a 5-year-old. My boyfriend is good to her. Am I crazy for needing some "us" time? I am really lonely.

CRAVING AFFECTION IN OHIO

DEAR CRAVING: You are not "crazy"; you are normal. Because you feel starved for affection, this is something you should have started discussing with your boyfriend years

DEAR ABBY

BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



ago. He may be a great father figure, but if he chooses to ignore having an intimate adult relationship with you, you're looking at a lifetime of loneliness. Bear in mind this may be something you can compromise on with couples counseling, but only if he is willing.

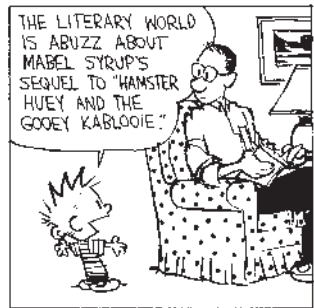
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To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

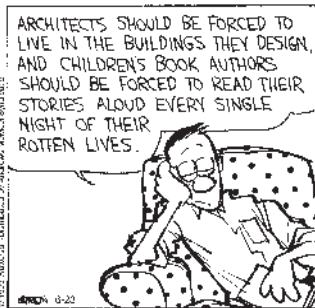
Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

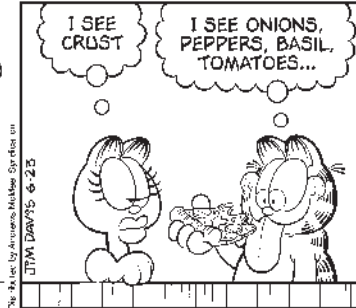
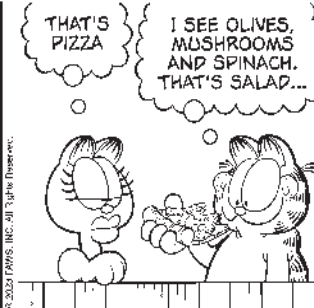


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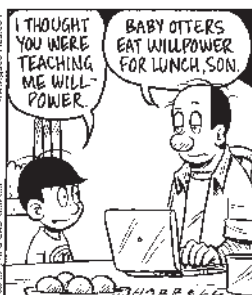
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



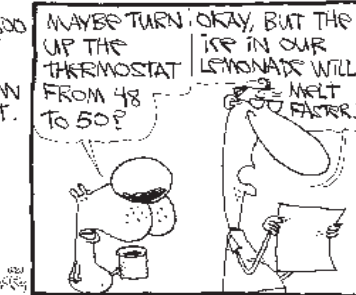
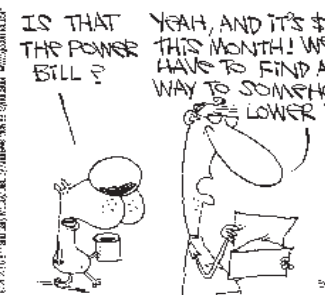
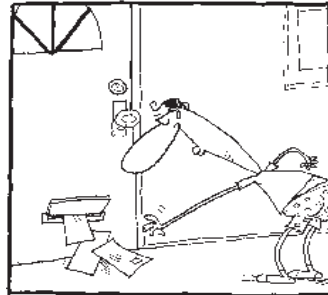
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Ship's sail
4 Free (of)
7 Disney film set in Polynesia
12 Tramcar filler
13 Past
14 "Holy cow!"
15 Rebellion leader
16 Fad toys of the '50s
18 Noshed
19 Prophets
20 Lend a hand
22 Govt. stipend
23 Sad
27 "— My Turn" (Diana Ross hit song)
29 Sags
31 Church cries
34 Brag
35 Ice cream servings
37 Peach center
38 Half quart

DOWN

39 Poetic tribute
41 Rescue
45 Broadway duds
47 — Lancelot
48 Trousers features
52 Overly
53 Get up
54 Bottom line
55 Days of yore
56 Showy parrot
57 Hosp. sections
58 Singer
1 Hill of "Money-ball"
2 Hopping mad
3 Some kind of a nut
4 Stadium cheers
5 "Reckon so"
6 Hands (out)
7 Mineral-hardness scale
8 "Caught ya!"
9 "I love," to Livy
10 Snooze
11 Reply (Abbr.)
17 Saharan
21 Wine grape
23 Rainy day footwear
24 Mauna —
25 Boom times
26 Ballpark fig.
28 Recipe abbr.
30 Hitler's stat
31 Egyptian cobra
32 Roman 1101
33 Ages and ages
36 Aviator's milestone
37 Jalapeño, for one
40 "Lorna —"
42 Fall flower
43 "Fences" actress
44 Wear down
45 Soared
46 Swift jets
48 "Kapow!"
49 Geo-logical period
50 DMV doc
51 Airport screening org.

Solution time: 25 mins.

S	A	M	M	O	T	H	A	M	O	R
I	D	O	A	B	E	E	L	C	B	O
M	O	O	C	H	I	N	G	M	R	I
J	A	L	T	E	N	A	N	T	S	
E	T	U	D	E	S	L	E	N		
R	B	I	R	U	M	T	A	M	P	S
T	A	C	O	V	I	P	C	G	O	T
E	R	E	C	T	T	A	J	C	L	E
M	I	M	O	S	A	S	T	A	I	
A	S	A	P	M	C	O	N	B	E	A
R	S	T	U	A	S	H	E	S	A	P
S	A	S	S	R	O	S	I	T	A	G

Yesterday's answer 6-23

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Melissa Rauch, 43; Jason Mraz, 46; Frances McDormand, 66; Randy Jackson, 67.

Happy Birthday: Keep the communication going until you understand what others expect of you and what options are available. Problems with friends, relatives or colleagues will surface if you let your emotions slip into controversial conversations. Keep a strong hold on your plans and oversee every detail yourself. Trust in your ability to make a difference. Reinforce your knowledge and qualifications. Avoid temptation. Your numbers are 7, 15, 22, 26, 34, 40, 42.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Do something that motivates you. How you react to someone you love will determine the outcome of a decision you have to make regarding prospects. Choose peace and love over discord and chaos, and you'll outmaneuver anyone trying to take advantage of you. ★★★★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Don't go overboard. Taking on too much or trying to impress by overspending will backfire. Aim to maintain balance and integrity and to get along with everyone without promising too much. Do your best to be fair, and avoid being compromised. ★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Take note of others' responses. Someone will volunteer information that helps you decide who to support and how to do it. Refuse to let a fast-talker mesmerize you with tall tales. Don't back a bragger; look for the real deal and contribute wisely. ★★★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Protect against anyone taking advantage of you. Be blunt about what you want and willing to move forward alone if that's what it takes

to reach your destination. Learn from your experience, and act on your own behalf to ensure your success. ★★★★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Slow down and revisit your motives before you move on. Spontaneity may be exciting, but not promising. Choose your words wisely and fact-check the data you gather before sharing information. Don't underestimate how much the changes you want to make will cost. ★★★★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Slow down, focus on details and be resourceful. You have plenty to gain if you adapt to what's mandatory and manipulate what doesn't suit your needs. Choose your destiny and reward yourself for a change. Don't rely on others; do for yourself. ★★★★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Rely on your intelligence to get you through the day. Don't be fooled by what someone tries to pass on as the truth. Make decisions based on what you see and how others react. Handle financial, emotional and legal matters personally. ★★★★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Take better care of yourself. Concentrate on those you feel responsible for. Don't spend unnecessarily or get involved in fast-cash scams or joint ventures. Pay attention to what's happening around you, and refrain from acting hastily or with pretense. ★★★★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Be observant. If someone confuses you, back away. Rely on yourself to get things done and to figure out what makes you happy. Take responsibility for yourself and focus on living a healthy lifestyle. Personal growth is on the rise. ★★★★★

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Safe investments will ease your mind and motivate you to enjoy downtime more. Finalize deals, restructure your lifestyle to promote better health and make changes at home that are affordable and well received by those around you. Verify the information you receive. ★★★★★

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Money management is necessary regarding household expenses and joint ventures. Don't take on debt that will weigh heavy on your mind. Make well-thought-out decisions based on facts and figures, not hype. Focus on self-improvement instead of trying to change others. ★★

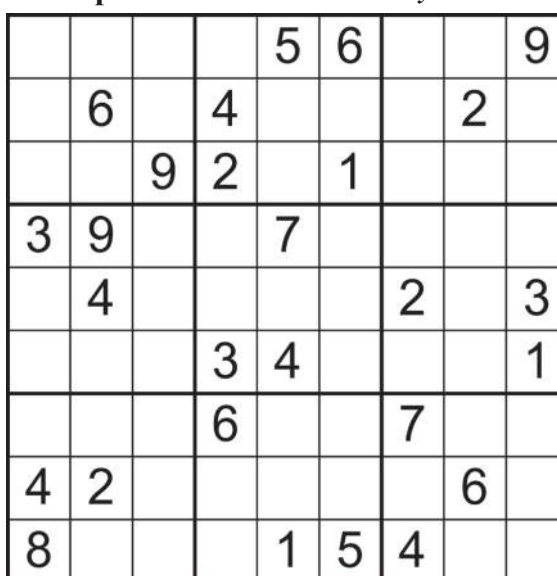
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Put your heart into making your home comfortable and peaceful. Stick to basics and the truth, and lay down a foundation to build your dream. Refuse to let outsiders interfere. Be direct and do what makes you happy. 3 stars
Birthday Baby: You are helpful, patient and curious. You are observant and unpredictable.

★: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ★★: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ★★★: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ★★★★★: Aim high; start new projects. ★★★★★: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

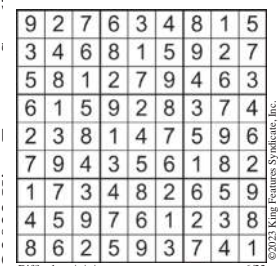
Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green



Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer



Difficulty: ★★★ 6/23

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

SUMMER VACATIONS IN TEXAS

Solution: 9 letters

O L L I R A M A T O U R I S T
G L E K R O N S H O U S T O N
R O D R E I P A L O D U R O E
N E R B I K E R I D E M T F T
E R N M A K A Y A K O S R A S
W D S R A L A N I O E I E N I
B A D S A U N D H D V O D I E X
R P S A U G F Y L R C T V L T
A H L L N K G A I S A O R E H
U T O L R A G V L E W H L A S
N U O A R O E E H L S I A T T
F O P D L R E L P A S O M N R
E S E F O R T W O R T H O A E
L N H A B R E T T I L H C S E
S D R A Y K C O T S L I A R T

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Amarillo, Bike Ride, Camel River, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Frio River, Galveston, Garner, Golf, Gorman Falls, Heat, Hike, Hot, Houston, Kayak, Moody Gardens, New Braunfels, Old Baldy, Palo Duro, Park, Pier, Pools, Santa Elena, Schlitterbahn, Sixth Street, Snorkel, South Padre, Stockyards, Swim, Tent, Tourist, Trails, Waco
Yesterday's Answer: All Stars

To purchase WONDERWORD books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6460. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

Reds extend win streak to 11 games; longest since 1957



CINCINNATI (AP) —

Jake Fraley hit a tiebreaking, two-run homer in the eighth inning, and the Cincinnati Reds extended their majors-best winning streak to 11 games, rallying past the Colorado Rockies 5-3 on Wednesday for a three-game sweep.

Rookie sensation Elly De La Cruz hit a one-out bloop to left that fell for a double against Daniel Bard (3-1), and Fraley hit the next pitch over the wall in right, sending the Reds to their majors-best 12th comeback win of the season and the Rockies to their season-worst eighth straight loss. Cincinnati trailed 3-0 after four innings.

The NL Central-leading Reds (40-35) have swept three straight three-game series and won five consecutive series overall. Their winning streak is the club's longest since winning 12 straight in 1957.

Andrew Abbott allowed the first run of his career when Brenton Doyle led off the game with a homer. But the rookie left-hander was solid from there, striking out a career-high 10 in six innings and giving up three runs, all on solo homers. Abbott struck out the side in the sixth.

Abbott combined with Lucas Sims, Ian Gibaut and Buck Farmer to hold the Rockies scoreless after the fourth. Gibaut (8-1) pitched around a leadoff single in the eighth and Farmer worked the ninth for his second save in five tries. The Rockies struck out 15 times.

RAYS 7, ORIOLES 2

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)—Rookie Taj Bradley allowed one run over a career-high six innings, Randy Arozarena and Isaac Paredes homered, and Tampa Bay beat Baltimore to split a two-game series between the top two teams in the AL East.

Bradley (5-3) gave up three hits and struck out eight.

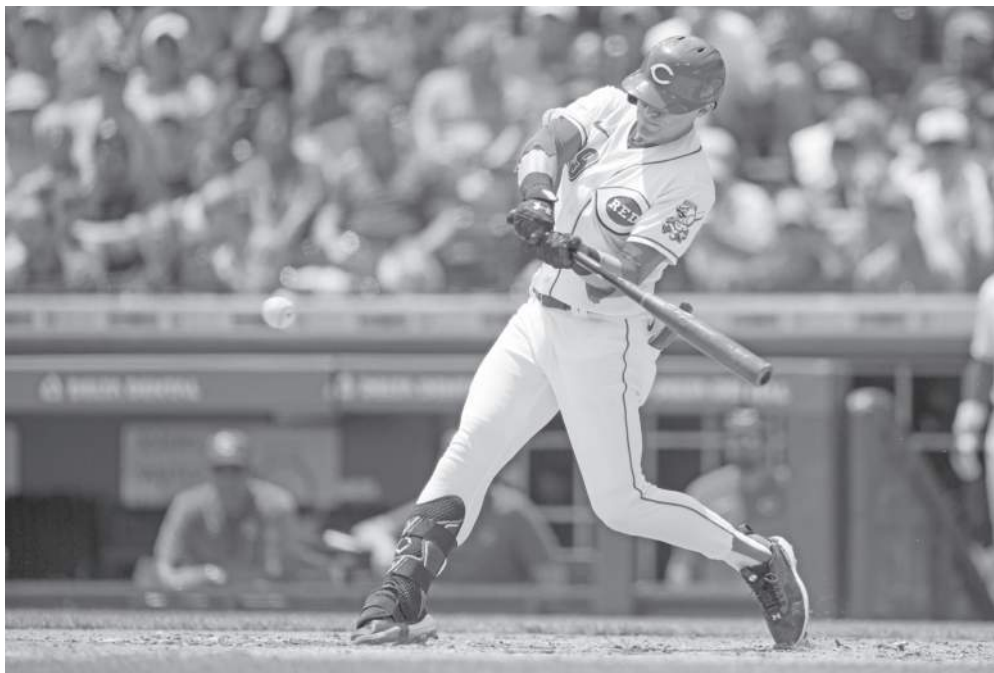
Arozarena and Paredes started a four-run second with consecutive homers against Tyler Wells (6-3), who also made two errors during the inning.

Arozarena had an RBI single in a two-run seventh as Tampa Bay improved to 32-8 at home and stopped a season-long three-game skid overall.

Ramón Urias and Gunnar Henderson homered for the Orioles, who are five back of the first-place Rays.

YANKEES 4, MARINERS 2

NEW YORK (AP)—Jhony Brito pitched a career-high 5 2/3 scoreless innings in a return to the major leagues and



Cincinnati Reds' TJ Friedl hits an RBI-single during the fifth inning of a baseball game against the Colorado Rockies in Cincinnati, Wednesday, June 21, 2023.

New York beat Seattle.

Fill-ins Jake Bauers and Billy McKinney homered off Luis Castillo (4-6) as the Yankees won a series for the first time since placing Aaron Judge on the injured list. New York is 6-8 with Judge out of the lineup and had not won a series since taking two of three from the Dodgers in Los Angeles 2 1/2 weeks ago.

Rookie Anthony Volpe added his 10th homer in the seventh after nearly missing a homer in the third.

GUARDIANS 7, ATHLETICS 6

CLEVELAND (AP)—Rookie Bo Naylor scored the go-ahead run in the eighth inning on a throwing error, Gavin Williams pitched 5 2/3 innings in his major league debut and Cleveland beat Oakland.

Naylor singled for his first hit in the majors—snapping an 0-for-19 drought—and scored on Steven Kwan's one-out double. Myles Straw was the first to score on Kwan's hit, which turned into a two-run play when right fielder Ramón Laureano wildly flung the ball back to the infield.

Williams, the Guardians' consensus top prospect and 2021 first-round pick, allowed four runs on four hits — all in the third — while striking out four. The right-hander maxed out at 98 mph, topping 96 mph on 18 of his 84 pitches.

DODGERS 2, ANGELS 0

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP)—Freddie Freeman hit his 14th homer off Shohei Ohtani in the fourth inning, and seven relievers combined on a two-hitter in the Dodgers' second straight shutout victory in the Freeway Series.

Ohtani (6-3) pitched seven innings of five-hit ball with two walks and 12 strikeouts.

But Ohtani went 0 for 7 at the plate in these two rivalry games against the Dodgers, while Mike Trout went 0 for 8.

Miguel Vargas homered in the ninth inning, and Evan Phillips capped a stellar bullpen game by picking up his ninth save to conclude the Dodgers' eighth consecutive victory over the Angels.

ASTROS 10, METS 8

HOUSTON (AP)—Alex Bregman had three hits and Yainer Diaz and Chas McCormick hit two-run homers to help Houston outlast New York to win the three-game series.

Houston fell behind 4-2 early after a subpar start by Cristian Javier. McCormick's home run came in a four-run third inning that put the Astros on top. The Mets tied it in the top of the fourth, but the Astros went ahead for good by scoring three runs in the bottom of the inning, highlighted by Diaz's home run.

Daniel Vogelbach had a season-high three hits with three RBIs and Pete Alonso hit his 23rd homer as the Mets dropped a second straight game after winning the series opener 11-1.

Mauricio Dubón doubled with one out in the fourth and scored on a two-out single by Bregman to put the Astros up 7-6. Diaz sent the next pitch from Dominic Leone (2-2) into left-center for his third homer in five games to make it 9-6.

NATIONALS 3, CARDINALS 0

WASHINGTON (AP)—Trevor Williams outpitched Miles Mikolas in steady rain, CJ Abrams went 3 for 3 with a homer and Washington beat St. Louis to end a five-game skid.

With the rain getting heavier

in the fifth inning, Abrams sent a 1-0 fastball from Mikolas (4-5) into the visitors' bullpen in left-center. Jeimer Candelario drove in runs for Washington with a double in the sixth and a grounder in the eighth.

Williams (4-4) allowed five hits and threw 75 pitches while working into the seventh inning for the first time this year as he cooled off the Cardinals, who had won four straight. St. Louis was shut out for the seventh time this season.

Hunter Harvey pitched the ninth for his fourth save.

CUBS 8, PIRATES 3

PITTSBURGH (AP)—Kyle Hendricks pitched effectively into the seventh inning, Nico Hoerner homered, tripled and drove in three runs and Chicago beat Pittsburgh to complete a three-game sweep.

Hendricks (3-2) won his third consecutive start for the Cubs, who have won eight of nine to give them some serious momentum heading into a weekend series against rival St. Louis in London, England, starting on Saturday.

Hoerner hit a two-run triple off Rich Hill (6-7) in the third and added a solo home run in the seventh. Ian Happ doubled twice and drove in two runs.

The Pirates have dropped nine straight, their longest losing streak since a nine-game slide from June 6-16, 2021. The franchise was in full-on rebuilding mode then. Pittsburgh believes it is drawing closer to becoming a contender but the good vibes that came with a promising 19-9 start have faded over the past two weeks. The Pirates are 15-30 over their past 45 games.

TIGERS 9, ROYALS 4

DETROIT (AP)—Zack Short homered and drove in three runs, Javier Báez got his 1,000th hit and Detroit sent

slumping Kansas City to its 15th loss in 18 games.

Matthew Boyd (5-5) allowed two runs and six hits in six innings for Detroit. He struck out seven without a walk.

Brady Singer (4-7) lost his third straight decision, giving up five runs, seven hits and a walk in seven innings.

Báez put the Tigers ahead 4-2 in the third, driving in Kerry Carpenter with his 1,000th hit.

BLUE JAYS 6, MARLINS 3

MIAMI (AP)—Matt Chapman homered and doubled, Kevin Gausman pitched six-plus innings of three-run ball and Toronto beat Miami.

Cavan Biggio stepped in for late scratch Bo Bichette and doubled and singled for the Blue Jays. Bichette, who leads the American League in hits with 101 and played in Toronto's first 75 games, sat out because of left thumb discomfort.

Luis Arraez went 2 for 5 for the Marlins and is hitting a major league-leading .398.

Gausman (7-3) allowed eight hits and struck out six in his 12th start of six or more innings. Jordan Romano picked up his 22nd save.

Marlins starter Sandy Alcantara had another rough outing. The reigning NL Cy Young Award winner gave up five runs and 10 hits over seven innings as his ERA increased to 5.08. Alcantara (2-6) has allowed double-digit hits in each of his past two starts.

DIAMONDBACKS 5, BREWERS 1

MILWAUKEE (AP)—Zac Gallen pitched seven strong innings for his ninth win and Arizona took two out of three games from Milwaukee in the series.

Gallen (9-2) limited the Brewers to one run and three hits. He walked one and struck out four. He allowed a solo home run to Raimel Tapia in the fifth inning.

Scott McGough pitched two scoreless innings with four strikeouts to close out the victory and pick up his fourth save.

The NL West-leading Diamondbacks broke through in the sixth against Brewers reliever Elvis Peguero (1-1). Pavin Smith walked with one out and scored to tie it when center fielder Joey Wiemer failed to cleanly field Emmanuel Rivera's sharply hit single up the middle. Rivera scored on Alek Thomas' line-drive single to right to give Arizona a 2-1 lead.

TWINS 5, RED SOX 4, 10 INNINGS

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—

Kyle Farmer hit a game-winning single that scored automatic runner Willi Castro from third base and Minnesota beat Boston.

Farmer's line drive fell in front of Jarren Duran, who was playing shallow in center field, scoring Castro and snapping Minnesota's three-game losing streak. Michael A Taylor dropped a sacrifice bunt that moved Castro to third base, setting up the potential winning run.

Max Kepler homered for the second straight game for the Twins and added an RBI single. Minnesota had lost five of its last six games.

Reliever Jovani Moran (1-2) earned the win for the Twins. Kaleb Ort (1-1) took the loss for the Red Sox.

RANGERS 6, WHITE SOX 3

CHICAGO (AP)—Jonah Heim hit a three-run homer a night after he was involved in a controversial play at the plate and Texas beat Chicago.

Ezequiel Duran also connected as Texas won for the fourth time in five games. Martín Pérez (7-3) pitched seven effective innings in his first victory in a month.

The AL West leaders bounced back nicely after a frustrating 7-6 loss Tuesday night. Chicago scored the winning run in its three-run eighth when Heim was called for illegally blocking the plate in a replay review that overturned umpire D.J. Reyburn's out call.

Andrew Vaughn hit a solo homer for the slumping White Sox, and Michael Kopech (3-6) lasted just four innings in his shortest start of the season. Chicago has dropped eight of 11.

GIANTS 4, PADRES 2

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Sean Hjelle pitched four shut-out innings of relief to help San Francisco extend its winning streak to 10 games, beating Yu Darvish and San Diego.

Joc Pederson and Mike Yastrzemski added RBI singles, and the Giants turned four double plays to keep their longest win streak since 2004 intact.

San Francisco also benefited from an overturned call at home plate in the fifth.

Hjelle (2-1) allowed three hits and had five strikeouts, including one of Tatis, who went down swinging to end the top of the fifth with runners at second and third. Four relievers followed Hjelle. Camilo Doval got the final three outs for his 20th save.

Trent Grisham had two hits and a RBI for San Diego. The Padres have lost five of seven.

Wembanyama easy No. 1; AP has Miller second, Henderson third

By BRIAN MAHONEY
AP Basketball Writer

Victor Wembanyama's NBA draft experience will be quite unlike last year's No. 1 pick.

Paolo Banchero could never be certain he would be taken first. There was too much speculation that Orlando was also considering Jabari Smith Jr. and Chet Holmgren, with some mock drafts listing Banchero below both. The eventual Rookie of the Year said he didn't find out he was the Magic's choice until less than a minute before Commissioner Adam Silver went on stage in Brooklyn.

Wembanyama has no need to wait.

1. SAN ANTONIO SPURS: VICTOR WEMBANYAMA, FORWARD, FRANCE

His combination of a center's size and a guard's shooting and dribbling make the 19-year-old a prospect perhaps unlike any other the NBA has seen, and should end the 13-year streak of the No. 1 pick being a college freshman. The Spurs won five NBA titles after taking Tim Duncan in 1997, the last time they had the No. 1 pick and dream of a similar impact from Wembanyama, who is listed at 7-foot-4.

2. CHARLOTTE HORNETS: BRANDON MILLER, FORWARD, ALABAMA

At 6-9, the SEC player of the year and tournament MVP as a freshman has the size, versatility and 3-point stroke to make him an ideal player for the modern NBA game. But the Hornets, who played without Miles Bridges last season after an arrest for a domestic violence incident against the mother of his children, may have to weigh a negative reaction if they add Miller, who delivered the gun used in a fatal shooting.

3. PORTLAND TRAIL BLAZERS: SCOOT HENDERSON, GUARD, G LEAGUE IGNITE

Worked out for the Trail Blazers and showed the athleticism and ability to do it all from the guard spot that may have made Henderson the No. 1 pick in many years. This time, he could be part of a trade if the Blazers decide they'd prefer to acquire more veteran help around Damian Lillard—or perhaps Lillard's replacement if they instead decide to build around youth.

4. HOUSTON ROCKETS: AMEN THOMPSON, GUARD, OVERTIME ELITE

At 6-7, Thompson has great size for a guard and the 20-year old

showed the ability to step up when it matters most, averaging 17.2 points, 9.2 assists and 7.2 rebounds in the playoffs to lead the City Reapers to the championship last season. The Rockets, after adding Jalen Green and Jabari Smith Jr. in the last two drafts, are positioned to get another good one.

5. DETROIT PISTONS: CAM WHITMORE, FORWARD, VILLANOVA

The Pistons fell to the lowest spot possible in the lottery after finishing with the NBA's worst record and sharing the best odds of landing the No. 1 pick. But getting Whitmore, a versatile wing with a strong build, to add to young pieces such as Cade Cunningham and Jaden Ivey under new coach Monty Williams would help ease the sting.

6. ORLANDO MAGIC: AUSAR THOMPSON, FORWARD, OVERTIME ELITE

Amen Thompson's twin brother has been the Overtime Elite regular season and finals MVP the last two seasons and the 6-7 swingman plays big on defense, twice blocking seven shots in a game. The Magic were a team on the rise in the second half of last season and Thompson could help ensure that continues.

7. INDIANA PACERS: JARACE WALKER, FORWARD, HOUSTON

Coming from Houston's rugged program means Walker already plays NBA-ready defense, and the offensive end could come along quickly under Rick Carlisle. At 6-8, 240 pounds, he already has the size and strength to deal with anyone he could face in the frontcourt.

8. WASHINGTON WIZARDS: ANTHONY BLACK, GUARD, ARKANSAS

With Bradley Beal going and no certainty that Chris Paul will stay, there's an opportunity for an immediate impact in the Washington backcourt. The 6-7 guard seems to have endless energy, playing nearly 35 minutes a game to lead the Southeastern Conference and all 20 minutes in a half 19 times.

9. UTAH JAZZ: TAYLOR HENDRICKS, CENTRAL FLORIDA

The 6-9 freshman makes an impact inside and outside on both ends of the floor. He led the American Athletic Conference in blocked shots and shot 39% from 3-point range, becoming the only Division I player last season with at least 60 3-pointers, 55 blocked shots and 35 dunks.



Boulogne-Levallois' Victor Wembanyama dunks the ball in action during the playoffs of the Elite basketball match Boulogne-Levallois against Monaco at the Roland Garros stadium in Paris, Thursday, June 15, 2023.

10. DALLAS MAVERICKS: GRADEY DICK, GUARD, KANSAS

Dick made 83 3-pointers, most in Kansas history by a freshman, and the 6-8 forward could get plenty of open looks when Mavericks opponents focus their attention on Luka Doncic and Kyrie Irving—if Irving remains in Dallas.

11. ORLANDO MAGIC (from Chicago Bulls): BILAL COULIBALY, FORWARD, FRANCE

Wembanyama's teammate with Metropolitans 92 is a 6-6 swingman whose stock rose as their team reached their French League finals. He hasn't reached his potential yet as a scorer, but his 7-3 wingspan allows him to impact the game on both ends even without doing so and could make him a good fit with 2022 No. 1 pick and Rookie of the Year Paolo Banchero.

12. OKLAHOMA CITY THUNDER: DERECK LIVELY II, CENTER, DUKE

Is still limited offensively, but the 7-1 Lively shows promise as a rebounder and shot blocker, highlighted by 14 boards and eight blocks in a game against rival North Carolina.

13. TORONTO RAPTORS: JALEN HOOD-SCHIFINO, GUARD, INDIANA

The Big Ten freshman of the year has great size in the backcourt at 6-6 and could help the Raptors guard against a potential loss of Fred VanVleet in free agency, but needs to become a better shooter after hitting only 40% from the field in his lone season.

14. NEW ORLEANS PELICANS: CASON WALLACE, KENTUCKY

A point guard who takes care of the ball and takes it away from opponents, he was fourth in the

SEC in both steals per game and assist-to-turnover ratio. At 6-4, has the size and strength to defend some of the marquee guards in the Western Conference.

15. ATLANTA HAWKS: KOBE BUFKIN, GUARD, MICHIGAN

Massive leap from first to second year of college, averaging 14 points as a sophomore after not starting a game while averaging 3.0 points as a freshman. Next leap is to the NBA, where the 6-4 lefty could quickly be a change-of-pace guard off the bench.

16. UTAH JAZZ (from Minnesota): KEYONTE GEORGE, GUARD, BAYLOR

The highest-ranked recruit in program history lived up to the billing in his lone college season, scoring 20 or more points 12 times and averaging 15.3 en route to Big 12 freshman of the year honors.

17. LOS ANGELES LAKERS: NICK SMITH JR., GUARD, ARKANSAS

After mixed results with Russell Westbrook and D'Angelo Russell last season, the Lakers' search for guard help could lead to Arkansas, where the 6-5 Smith played in just 17 games in his lone college season after recovering from a right knee injury but showed the ability to play either guard spot.

18. MIAMI HEAT: JORDAN HAWKINS, GUARD, UCONN

Ballhandling still needs improvement, but Hawkins' catch-and-shoot ability was one of the biggest reasons the Huskies stormed through the NCAA Tournament to their fifth national title, and something the Heat were missing in their NBA Finals loss.

19. GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS: NOAH CLOWNEY, FORWARD, ALABAMA

Clowney put up nearly eight rebounds and a block per game in his lone college season. With just 210 pounds on his 6-10 frame, he will need to add strength for the battles inside against NBA big men.

20. HOUSTON ROCKETS (from LA Clippers): KRIS MURRAY, FORWARD, IOWA

After averaging 20.2 points—with a 30-point, 20-rebound game in one outing—Murray will try to make a similar first-year NBA impact as twin brother Keegan, who after leaving the Hawkeyes became an immediate starter for Sacramento last season and was an All-Rookie first-team selection.

21. BROOKLYN NETS (from Phoenix): JETT HOWARD, GUARD, MICHIGAN

His willingness to fire from behind the arc makes the freshman a perfect fit for the 3-point happy NBA. The 6-8 freshman made multiple 3-pointers in 24 of his 29 games for Juwan Howard, his father, and hit three or more in almost half of them. Howard made 36.8% of them while averaging 14.2 points

22. BROOKLYN NETS: LEONARD MILLER, FORWARD, G LEAGUE IGNITE

The Nets have needed more scoring punch since trading Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving, and Miller looks capable of providing it after averaging 18 points last season. The 6-10 Canadian also averaged nearly 11 rebounds, another area Nets leadership has identified as a priority.

23. PORTLAND TRAIL BLAZERS (from New York): BRICE SENSABAUGH, FORWARD, OHIO STATE

Averaged 16.3 points and shot better than 40% from 3-point range in his strong one season for the Buckeyes, where he was the first freshman to lead the team in scoring since D'Angelo Russell in 2015.

24. SACRAMENTO KINGS: MAXWELL LEWIS, FORWARD, PEPPERDINE

The 6-7 Lewis made nearly 80% of his free throws and 36% of his 3-point attempts in his two seasons with the Waves, and improved his ability to score off the dribble while averaging 17.1 points last season.

25. MEMPHIS GRIZZLIES: G.G.

JACKSON, FORWARD, SOUTH CAROLINA

Would have been heading to college now—perhaps as the No. 1 prospect—before reclassifying last summer to enter a year earlier. Instead, the 6-9 Jackson is on his way to the NBA after scoring in double figures in 25 of his 32 games, averaging 15.4 points.

26. INDIANA PACERS (from Cleveland): JAIME JAEQUEZ JR., GUARD, UCLA

The do-everything swingman led the Bruins with 17.8 points and 8.2 rebounds, becoming their first Pac-12 player of the year since Kevin Love in 2008. At 6-7, Jaquez does everything well—he's No. 8 in UCLA history in both points and steals—but maybe not any of them at the top NBA level.

27. CHARLOTTE HORNETS (from Denver via New York and Oklahoma City): AMARI BAILEY, GUARD, UCLA

Bailey had a strong finish to his lone college season, averaging 16.7 points on 56% shooting in the Bruins' run to the Sweet 16. The Hornets struggle when LaMelo Ball is out, so the 6-5 guard could be appealing to a team that was fourth-worst in the NBA in scoring.

28. UTAH JAZZ (from Philadelphia via Brooklyn): COLBY JONES, GUARD, XAVIER

With three picks in the first round, the Jazz are positioned to bolster a team that hung around the playoff race much longer than expected. The 6-6 Jones, who made 18 of 21 shots in one torrid stretch last season and shot 9 of 10 on 3-pointers in another, could be a nice late addition.

29. INDIANA PACERS (from Boston): BRANDIN PODZIEMSKI, GUARD, SANTA CLARA

Made 43.8% of his 3-pointers in his lone season after transferring from Illinois, accuracy from behind the arc that NBA teams covet. The 6-5 guard shared WCC player of the year honors after averaging 19.9 points and 8.8 rebounds, finishing in the top three in the conference in both categories.

30. LOS ANGELES CLIPPERS (from Milwaukee via Houston): DARIQ WHITEHEAD, FORWARD, DUKE

Arrived at Duke as the high school player of the year, but a foot injury led to a delayed start to his college career followed by shooting struggles after it finally began. But the 6-7 forward showed enough defensive and 3-point abilities in his limited time to make himself worthy of a first-round spot.

McDonald's a proud sponsors of NMBA tourneys

McDonald's of Guam & Saipan is excited to announce its bronze sponsorship of the Crowne Plaza Northern Marianas Open 2023 and TakeCare Saipan International 2023.

As part of its ongoing commitment to supporting local communities and promoting sports, McDonald's has made a cash donation of \$1,000.

These tournaments marked a significant milestone for the Northern Marianas Islands, as they hosted two qualifying tournaments for the 2024 Paris Summer Olympics.

This is the first time that the Northern Marianas Islands have been selected to host an Olympic qualifier, making it an exceptional opportunity to showcase the region's passion for badminton.

From June 6 to 11 and from June 13 to 18, the Northern Marianas Islands welcomed over 100 talented athletes from across Asia and the Pacific Oceania region.

The tournaments provided



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Melba Camacho, area manager at McDonald's Middle Road; Marcia E. Ayuyu, vice president and owner/operator of McDonald's Guam and Saipan; and Merlie Tolentino, president of Northern Marianas Badminton Association, proudly show off the facsimile check for \$1,000.

a platform for these athletes to compete against each other, display their skills, and fight for a chance to represent their respective countries at the 2024 Paris Summer Olympics.

As a bronze sponsor, McDonald's is proud to contribute to the success of these tournaments and to support the development of badminton in the Northern Marianas Islands.

"We recognize the positive impact of sports on individuals and communities, fostering teamwork, discipline, and a healthy lifestyle. Through our sponsorship and cash donation, we aim to encourage aspiring athletes, promote sportsmanship, and inspire the next generation of badminton players," McDonald's said.

For more information about

resented, which was more than the 2022 Pacific Mini Games, for traveling all the way here. He also thanked the Northern Marianas Sports Association and its president Jerry Tan for the management and care of the Oleai Sports Complex.

He said, "It is always challenging and difficult to just simply travel and the words 'ocean is what separates us,' I think really it's the other way around. It's the ocean that connects us."

For Sapong, he thanked everyone for the opportunity to showcase the talent around the Pacific. Palacios also welcomed everyone to the CNMI and hoped that they would enjoy their stay here.

As for Oceania Athletics Association executive director Yvonne Mullin, she said in an interview with the media

after the opening remarks, that the first day of events turned out well.

"Athletes, certainly the masters, are competing well against everybody and are enjoying it. I think it's opened up a whole new world for people who are over 30 years of age so that they can come out and compete, have fun, and stay fit. We think masters sport is about keeping people in sport for life."

She acknowledged that coming out to hold the events in the CNMI is a great opportunity for the sport here to grow and for every age group to be involved. She also said that it's the best facility in Micronesia at the moment and the only real facility in the Pacific, so "NMI has the opportunity to keep it going and keep sport strong here," she said.

Complex, and back. We had over 180 players, and a total of more than 200 participants to include the various teams' officials/staff and competition umpires and referees. They are truly grateful for our island hospitality and many have expressed interest in coming back and competing again."

Badminton Oceania CEO Julie Carrel summed up the feedback for the tournaments in this statement:

"NMBA has delivered two world class BWF International badminton tournaments on Saipan with good entries and a high caliber of players. Your level of delivery and service to the players, coaches and officials was outstanding; we have received significant positive feedback from these people. The welcome dinner, the goodie bags, the farewell dinner all contributed to a very positive player experience which is usually not experienced at this

level of tournament."

Sharing more of BOC CEO comments: "You are a great team to work with; you make things happen, you ask questions and implement recommendations to a high standard—if every event delivery team I worked with was like your team, my life would be very easy. You have many very capable and willing people. Everyone is very pleasant and polite which makes working with your entire team such a pleasure. I hope that you are all happy and satisfied with how the tournaments went and that your stakeholders including sponsors are also happy with their return on investment. We certainly would like to work with you again to deliver a similar model in 2024, two tournaments in consecutive weeks."

For NMBA, the highlight of hosting the tournaments was the high level of play they witnessed. "As we all know,

McDonald's sponsorship and community initiatives, go to mark_rabago@saipantribune.com McDonald's of Guam &

Saipan, locally owned by Jose & Marcia Ayuyu, is the leading food service restaurant chain in the Mariana Islands. McDon-

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

J.R. Barrios led the age group winners in the road bike division of last Sunday's first stage of the 2023 Hell of the Marianas series by topping the 40-44 division.

The 40-year-old C&R Corp. employee completed the 35-kilometer course from Banzai Cliff to La Fiesta, to 1-Million Gallon Tank, to Bird Island, and back to Banzai Cliff in 1:20:41.

He was followed in his age group by Rod Gonzales and Fred Remilloza with times of 1:28:04 and 1:43:27, respectively.

Barrios said the hardest part of the race were the downhill portions because the roads were slippery as it rained before the start of the event.

In fact, the 40-year-old Davao City, Philippines native said he slipped a couple of times but was fortunate to regain control

Barrios leads age group winners

of his bike.

Barrios, who only started biking a year ago, said he usually practices from 30 kilometers to 100 kilometers in the runup to big races.

Renato Academia, meanwhile, was the lone competitor in the below 40 age group and finished the race in 1:38:43. Ditto for Renato Barros in the 50-54 category after crossing the finish line in 1:38:50.

In the 45-49 division, Heman Cristobal reigned supreme with a time of 1:20:49, followed by Elmer Esdrelon's 1:22:13 and Harold Balana's 1:22:18.

Noel Altimirano nipped Bernardo Laborce in the 55-58 division, 1:31:05 to 1:31:39, while not far behind was Nomer Mangalanao in 1:31:49.

Last but not the least, Pax Guevarra topped the 60-and-above division after clocking in at 1:25:09 with Ponce Corotan and Edgar Abalos following

ald's of Guam and Saipan have served the local communities for over 50 years on Guam and 30 years on Saipan and remains one of the island's largest employers. (PR)

him with times of 1:26:54 and 1:33:21, respectively.

Northern Mariana Islands Cycling Federation official Jay Diycio said a total of 26 bikers took part in the initial offering of the Hell of the Marianas series.

The second part will be on Aug. 20 and will encompass the Suicide Cliff, Bird Island Lookout, Banzai Cliff, and Radar route, while the third and last part will be on Oct. 15 and will start at Radar before going to Suicide Cliff, Bird Island Lookout, Banzai Cliff, Suicide Cliff, Bird Island Lookout, Grotto, then returns to Banzai Cliff.

The 2023 Hell of Marianas series concludes with the 100-kilometer 2023 Hell of the Marianas Century Cycle on Dec. 2.

For more information, contact NMI Cycling Federation president Vince Seman at nmi-cycling@gmail.com.

OCEANIA

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las swept first place in his age group as the lone competitor.

The other events that took place were the men's and women's master's championship hammer, shot put, and weight throw; the throws pentathlon master's championships; the men's 5,000m race walk; and the men's and women's master's 5,000m championships.

After a full swing of events yesterday, remarks were made by Northern Marianas Athletics president Ramon Tebuteb, NMA general secretary Robin Sapong, and Gov. Arnold I. Palacios.

Tebuteb recognized all the athletes, officials, and volunteers from the 23 countries rep-

MP United could not find a breakthrough in Matansa's goal and succumbed to the 0-7 blowout loss.

The rest of Matansa's team include Jacob Arkoh, Andy Chen, Amzad Khan, Lar Wongapa, Kamrul Kamrul, Song Park, Tom Linden, Gabriel Arkoh, Woynha Hwang, Houston Cuohua, Gabriel Arkoh Jr., Faycal El Karaa, Derek Cutting, and Ratol Robait.

In the battle for third place in MSL 1, Kanoa FC blanked Tan Holdings, 3-0.

Andrew Omelau weaved and bobbed through Tan Holdings' defenses and finally found openings twice and scored late

into the game—in the 57th and 69th minute.

Tan Holdings had still not scored any goals at this point and were seen losing steam, just as Kanoa struck again and scored their third goal in the 87th minute by Paul Lizama. Tan Holdings had no more gas left in their tank and went scoreless until the final minutes.

Other games of MSL 1 between Old B Bank and Shirley's resulted in a 2-0 Old B Bank win. Panapa Peteru scored in the 17th minute, while John Canape scored in the 26th minute and that was all they wrote as Shirley's could not retaliate.

ELEVEN

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and Dane Hodges.

In Matansa's game, they had more firepower than MP United as they bombarded their goalie right from the get go.

MP United had nothing going for them offensively and defensively as Matansa had already scored four of their goals in the first half—with one goal mistakenly shot into their own goal by MP United.

Jordan Ruiz completed the hat-trick by the 55th minute and was assisted by teammates Arif Khan and Harry Kapwich.

NMBA

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tors a good experience for two weeks and this was made possible by all the assistance we got from our volunteers, sponsors, and Badminton Oceania umpires and referees."

The two tournaments were considered Grade 3—the highest International Challenge level event.

The feedback from players in the tournaments were positive, according to Tolentino. She said one great feedback was on the transportation service provided during the whole two weeks of the tournament.

"Those athletes need[ed] to train and rest on time to get ready for their next game and having efficient and reliable transportation [was] critical to them. We did our best to transport them from the hotel to the two venues, the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium and TSL Sports

kinds of tournaments. Players from our interscholastic league and junior program watched the games for two weeks and I hope they get to draw inspiration from the visiting players to continue to commit to the sport, get better every day, and eventually have more opportunities to compete off-island."

She added that it's not only good for badminton, but for NMI sports tourism. When they were initially planning for this, they had no idea how many players would be coming. It ended up with more than 200 visitors who stayed for two weeks that stayed in hotels, dined in restaurants, and shopped at stores.

For what's next, NMBA will work with Badminton Oceania for a debrief of the tournaments. The NMBA is also planning to host a couple of local tournaments and then work with the interscholastic league late this year.

On behalf of NMBA they thanked the following sponsors for their success: Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, TakeCare, IT&E, D&Q, GPPC, Tan Siu Lin Foundation, USA Fanter, Marianas Visitors Authority, *Marianas Variety*, Saipan Computer Services-Ideal Sign, Hong Ye Construction, Island Apparel, Joeten Motors, Joeten Daidai Foundation, Traders Insurance, Cup BAB, Pacifica Insurance, Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation, CNMI Department of Fire And Emergency Medical Services, McDonald's, Bridge Capital, Shirley's Coffee Shop, MARPAC, Northern Marianas Sports Association, Pepoy's Restaurant, Sun Palace, Vickie Izuka, Saipan Ice & Water Co., First Hawaiian Bank, AYD, Coca-Cola, E-Land, American Red Cross-NMI Chapter, MakeOver Salon, JET Holdings, Badminton Oceania, and Badminton World Federation.

Crowne Plaza Northern Marianas Open and TakeCare Saipan International 2023



PHOTOS AND TEXT BY LEIGH GASES

South Korea's Chan Wang and Seung Chan Shin, mixed doubles finals winners of the Crowne Plaza Northern Marianas Open 2023, are seen in their finals match against Japan's mixed pairs.

The CNMI's Brian Lubao leaps for a return during his men's singles match against Chinese-Taipei in the TakeCare Saipan International 2023.



Sixth seed Takuma Obayashi of Japan, the men's singles champion, is seen here in his men's singles finals match in the TakeCare Saipan International 2023.



The CNMI's Leonard Manuel reaches for a return during one of his men's singles match in the TakeCare Saipan International 2023.



Top seed Kevin Cordon of Guatamala goes for a smash during his second round match in the TakeCare Saipan International 2023.



South Korea's Ga Ram Kim is seen in her women's singles match against Japan's Tomoka Miyazaki in the Take-Care Saipan International 2023.



Chinese-Taipei's mixed pair duo of Wei Chun Wei and Nicole Gonzales Chan goes up against USA in the mixed pairs finals of the TakeCare Saipan International.



Chinese-Taipei's women's doubles team of Hsu Ya Ching and Lin Wan Ching are champions of both the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan Northern Marianas Open 2023 and the TakeCare Saipan International 2023.



Chinese-Taipei's Liao Jhuo-Fu in his men's singles finals match in the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan Northern Marianas Open 2023.



Malaysia's Eveshgaran Vasigaran goes for a return during his men's singles match in the TakeCare Saipan International 2023.

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Reds extend win streak to 11 games; longest since 1957.

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Saipan Tribune Sports

McDonald's a proud sponsor of NMBA tourneys.

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24 FRIDAY, JUNE 23, 2023

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Oceania Cup, masters champs underway



LEIGH GASES

Runners of the men's 60m race out of the starting line yesterday afternoon in the first day of the Oceania Athletics Masters Championships at the Oleai Sports Complex.



LEIGH GASES

From left, Northern Marianas Sports Association president Jerry Tan, Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, Northern Marianas Athletics general secretary Robin Sapong, and NMA president Ramon Tebuteb pose for a photo after they made their welcoming remarks during the Oceania Cup and Oceania Masters Championships yesterday afternoon at the Oleai Sports Complex.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

For the first time, Micronesia is hosting the Oceania Athletics Masters Championships and also has the largest number of participants ever.



The events went underway starting yesterday at the Oleai Sports Complex track and field.

The Oceania Athletics Masters Championships and the concurrent Oceania Cup both have a total of 220 athletes participating in the events that will last until June 25.

In the men's 100m invitational finals, Melanesia's Pais Willis dashed in first with a

time of 10.87; second went to Polynesia's Johnny Key at 11.09; and third went to Melanesia's Inoke Waisake at 11.11 seconds.

Melanesia also claimed the top spot of the women's 100m invitational finals with a 12.63 time by Adrine Monagi. Second place also went to Melanesia's Chloe David at 13.27 and third place went to Polynesia's Filomaleonisa Iakopo with a time of 13.61.

In the women's masters 60m finals for the 40-44 age group, Australia's Cassie Newbauer came in first with a time of 9.67; second went

to the CNMI's Natalie Hill-Beyer at 9.78; and third went to Sheila Isla with a time of 11.82 seconds.

» **CNMI masters athletes rack up medals**

The women's 60m finals 50-54 was swept by NMI runners. First place went to Chiharu Sato at 10.32; second went to Jessica Ortizo with a time of 11.26; and third went to Lainnie Price at 11.85.

In the men's discus and javelin master's championships, the CNMI's Angel San Nico-

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NMBA pleased with success, turnout of qualifiers



LEIGH GASES

Northern Marianas Badminton Association president Merlie Tolentino, second right, Badminton Oceania CEO Julie Carrel, second left, Northern Marianas Sports Association president Jerry Tan, left, and Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan general manager Robert Coates are seen in the press conference before the start of the tournaments last June 5.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Hosts of the two badminton Olympic qualifiers—the Crowne Plaza Northern Marianas Open 2023 and TakeCare Saipan International 2023—



were pleased with its successful delivery of the tournaments. Northern Marianas Bad-

minton Association president Merlie Tolentino alluded to Badminton Oceania president Loke Poh Wong's high praises of NMBA, and in turn said that NMBA is "pleased that we were able to give our visi-

See NMBA on Page 22

Eleven Tiger, Matansa are MSL champs



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Eleven Tiger team poses for a photo after winning the Marianas Soccer League 1 championship last June 11 at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



Eleven Tiger is the Marianas Soccer League 1 champion, while Matansa clinched the MSL 2 title after their final games last June 11 and June 18 at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

Eleven Tiger took the MSL championship, 2-1, against MP United FC, and Matansa outscored MP United FC, 7-0, in the MSL 2 finale.

Sunjoon Tenorio took care of business for Eleven Tiger as he single-handedly scored his team's two goals. He had to work for it though as the first half came and went with no goals by Eleven Tiger.

MP United drew first blood and had a 1-0 lead in

the 29th minute by Dylan Mister, but could not cage up Eleven Tiger as they made a comeback in the second half.

With Tenorio in the roster of Eleven Tiger are Ariel Narvaez, Eunsyu Hahn, Anthony Austria, Zhixiang Lin, Akira Kadokura, Jack Unsa, Bada Lee, Brandy Onopwy, Floyd Muna, Jimmy Lin, Brandon Tenorio, Dave Mafnas, Jamin Elliot, Seho Baek,

See ELEVEN on Page 22